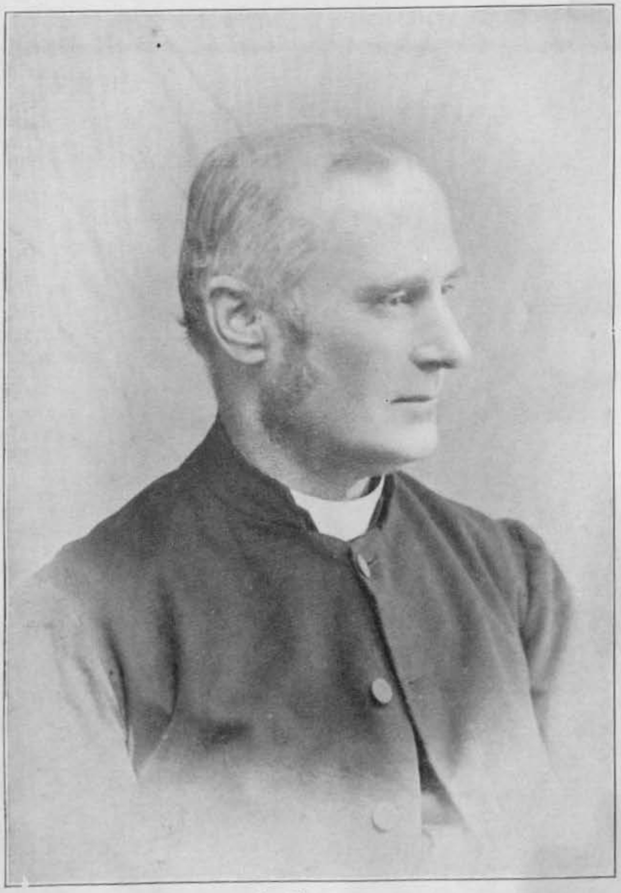
THE KACHARIS



THE KACHÁRIS



S. ENDLE.

From a Photograph by Messrs. Bourne & Shepherd.

Published under the orders of the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1911



S. Endle

From a Photograph by [illegible]

THE KACHÁRIS

BY THE LATE

REV. SIDNEY ENDLE

For many years Chaplain of Tezpur and in charge of the Kachári Mission of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at that place.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

J. D. ANDERSON, I.C.S. (RETIRED)

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N.B.—The Editorial Notes in this volume are from the pen of Colonel P. R. T. Gurdon, I.A., Director of Ethnology to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

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IN COLOUR

INTRODUCTION

It is with some diffidence that I comply with Colonel Gurdon's request that I should add a few words of preface and explanation to the last literary work of an old friend and pastor, whose loss will long be lamented in the Assam Valley, where he laboured as a missionary and planter's chaplain for upwards of forty years. Mr. Endle's interest in his Kachári flock was that of an evangelist rather than that of a linguist or ethnologist, and this preoccupation has coloured his style and affected the matter of his book in a way that, however pleasant and natural it may seem to those who had the privilege of his acquaintance, may perhaps require a few words of explanation for the benefit of those who look for anthropology only, or linguistics, in his pages.

My first duty, then, is to say a few words about the author's life and character. Sidney Endle was born about 1840 at Totnes in Devon, of sturdy yeoman parentage. His grandfather was, it seems, proud of being an armiger, and it is a family tradition that many Endles figured in the ranks of the Catholic clergy of the West country. Mr. Endle was educated at Totnes Grammar School, under the Rev. James Powney, and early conceived a wish to enter the ministry of the Church of England, and serve abroad as a missionary. With this view he entered St. Augustine's College at Canterbury. Unfortunately the College seems to have kept no written record of the dates at which one of the most distinguished and devoted of its pupils entered and left its roof. It was in February, 1864, however, that he was sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to Tezpur, in Assam, to be the assistant of Mr. Hesselmyer, then in charge of the Kachári mission at that place. In 1865 he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of

Calcutta, and in the following year he was admitted to priest's orders. Soon after he was transferred to the independent charge of the S.P.G. mission among the tea-garden coolies at Dibrugarh in Upper Assam. In 1869, on Mr. Hesselmyer's death, Mr. Endle was made chaplain of the important tea-planting district of Darrang, with the charge of the Kachári mission in that district, having his head-quarters at Tezpur. His pastoral duties were thus two-fold. On the one hand, he became the pastor of an European community scattered over an area some 100 miles in length by 30 or 40 in breadth. It was his duty to gather his flock round him at some convenient tea-garden, or at the pretty little rustic church at Tezpur itself, where his congregation included the small band of officials. He was everywhere welcome, and it was not long before he was as popular as he was respected. One of the most unworldly and simple of men, almost an ascetic in his personal tastes and habits, he could sympathise with and understand men whose training and ideas were different from his. He had a native shrewdness and quiet sense of humour which stood him in good stead in his dealings with men probably as varied in their origins and temperament as are to be found in any collection of Englishmen beyond the seas. His sermons—and he could preach with equal ease and eloquence in English, Assamese, and Kachári—were ever those of a man who to shrewd observation of the various life about him, native and European, added an unwavering devotion to the responsibilities of his calling. Authoritative, and even stern, he could be when he thought it needful to assert his responsibility as a priest. But, somehow, the occasion rarely occurred, since his was not the disposition that demands impossible perfection of ordinary human nature. There was no touch of intolerance in his gentle and (there is no other word to describe him) saintly nature. I think he would have liked to have it said of him that, like Chaucer's Parson,

> He was a shepherd and no mercenerie,
> And though he holy were and vertuous,
> He was to simple men not dispitous,
> Ne of his speech dangerous ne digne,
> But in his teaching discrete and benigne.

Innumerable were the marriages and christenings he celebrated in all parts of Assam, and it was characteristic of the man that he regarded it as a duty to keep himself informed of the welfare, spiritual and physical, of the children he held at the font. During his rare visits to England he endeavoured when he was not busy preaching for his mission, to visit those whom in their infancy he had admitted to his Church. Few chaplains in India can have been so universally popular and respected as he was, and this without in any way relaxing from the dignity which, in his case, belonged rather to his sacred office than to any consideration for his own person.

But he made no secret of the fact that his heart was chiefly in his missionary work among his beloved Kacháris. The Bodos of the Kachári *dwars* (the *dwars* or "doors" of the Kachári plains are the passes that lead into the rough mountains of independent Bhutan) are, like most of the aboriginal races of Assam, cheery, good-natured, semi-savage folk; candid, simple, trustful, but incorrigibly disrespectful according to Indian notions of good manners. To a casual observer, they may well have seemed incapable of comprehending the gentle reserve and unaffected unselfishness of their pastor's nature. Among them, however, it was his delight to unbend, and give way to the almost boyish simplicity and sense of fun which to the last were among his most engaging traits. When Mr. Endle approached a Kachári village during one of the prolonged preaching tours which were to him at once a duty and the keenest of pleasures, he was always greeted with a joyous and often noisy welcome. He travelled on foot, and the villagers would turn out to see the *gāmi-nī-brai*, the "old man of the village," as they affectionately called him. He was often cordially invited to share in the village festivities, and it was an interesting sight to watch him seated in the midst of rough semi-savage folk, listening to the tale of their simple joys and sorrows, enjoying their primitive jokes, and, when occasion served, talking to them, as probably no one else will ever be able to talk to them again, of the matters nearest to the missionary's heart.

In all parts of the Kachári country, Mr. Endle established many village schools, served by trusty converts. But his chief

pride was in the church he built at Bengbari, which, to his great joy, was consecrated by Bishop Milman in person. Under its thatched roof has now been placed a tablet to the memory of its founder.

No account of Mr. Endle's life, however brief, would be complete without a mention of the fact that in 1875 he married Miss Sarah Ewbank Chambers, who for twenty years shared his pastoral anxieties. Mrs. Endle was much respected by the European community throughout Assam, and her sudden death in Calcutta in 1895 was universally regretted. How sorely her husband felt her loss, not even those who knew him best were allowed to guess, but it was plain that, from this time onwards, much of his old elasticity of mind and body deserted him, and though he continued his work with unabated industry the effects of age began for the first time to be apparent to his friends. In 1884 Mr. Endle compiled his well-known manual of the Kachári language, published by the Assam Secretariat Press. From time to time he contributed papers on the subject of the Bodo people to the *Transactions* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. In 1891 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of St. Augustine's College, in recognition of his linguistic studies and of his eminence as a worker in the mission field. In 1906 he was offered a canonry by the Bishop of Calcutta, but characteristically refused a dignity which might have involved absences from his missionary duties.

Such, briefly told, are the few outstanding events in a life wholly devoted to pastoral work, of which little was known outside his native flock. It was Mr. Endle's repeatedly expressed wish that he might end his life and be laid to rest among his Kacháris. This wish was not fulfilled. Towards the end of 1905 it was evident that his persistent disregard of his personal comfort in an enervating climate had taxed a naturally robust constitution. He was induced with some difficulty to pay a brief visit to England for rest and change. He spent this holiday chiefly in preaching for his mission and visiting old friends. He was soon, perhaps too soon, back at his work. It could no longer be hidden from himself or others that he had overtaxed his strength. This, however, caused him no disquietude. He had done his day's work, and was

cheerfully ready to take his departure. In July 1907, he could struggle no longer against growing weakness, and was placed on one of the little mail steamers that ply up and down the Brahmaputra, in the hope that river breezes, rest, and change of scene might bring about some restoration to health. He himself, however, knew that his end was near, and he passed away, painlessly and peacefully, on the river bank at Dibrugarh, close to the scene of his first independent missionary charge, entrusted to him more than forty years before.

So much by way of biographical introduction seemed necessary, not only as an inadequate and too brief memorial of a singularly unselfish and blameless career, but also as an explanation of some features in Mr. Endle's book not usually found in anthropological manuals. Of the subject of the book itself I may now be allowed to say a few words, if only to show that it has an interest and importance, from an ethnological point of view, which are perhaps disguised by the author's characteristically modest estimate of his task and of his power of dealing with it. The book is, primarily, a monograph treating of that branch of the Kachári race which lives in scattered hamlets along the foot-hills of the Himalayas in Northern Bengal and Assam, intermixed now with Hindu people who have intruded into what was once their undisputed home. In Assam proper the Hindus call them Kacháris; in Bengal they are known as Meches.[1] Their own name for their race is Boṛo or Boḍo (the o has the sound of the English o in "hot"). Among this northern branch of the race is embedded the tribe of the Koch, whose name is pronounced locally as if it were Koss, (to rhyme with our English "boss"). (Kachári, I may mention in passing, is also pronounced as Koss-āri.) The Koch have gradually become a semi-Hindu caste, most of whose members now talk the Indian Bengali or Assamese. It also contains the surviving remnants of the royal family of the great and powerful Koch empire, which, roughly, covered the same area as the present province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. It can be proved that the aboriginal members of the Koch caste within quite recent times spoke the Boṛo language.

[1] Mech, sc. Mleccha, barbarian, one who is ignorant of civilised speech.

In the East of the Assam Valley was another powerful kingdom, that of the Chutiyas, whose language was another branch of the speech described in this book. The river names of the whole Brahmaputra Valley are Boḍo names, and it is demonstrable that the Boḍos were the aborigines of the Valley. In the great mass of hills, an outlying spur of the mountains of Upper Burma, which divide the Brahmaputra Valley from that of the river Surma which runs parallel to it from east to west are two more Boḍo groups. The most eastern of these comprises the Di-mā-sā, Great-River-Folk (di- means "river" or "water,") people who were driven out of the valley of the great river Brahmaputra in historical times, and finally became rulers of what is now the great tea-planting district of Cachar or Kāchār. They either gave its name to or perhaps derived their Hindu soubriquet of Kachāri from this district. Of this branch of the race an interesting description will be found in the supplement to this book. At the western extremity of the range of hills is another group, the Garos, of whom an excellent account has lately been published by Major A. Playfair, I.A. (London, David Nutt, 1909). The Garos are of peculiar interest as members of the Boḍo family, because they were head-hunters within the memory of men still living.

Finally in the range of hills in the south of the Surma Valley, there are the Tipperahs whose language is obviously a branch of the ancient Boḍo speech; quiet inoffensive people, ruled over by a semi-independent Raja who is also a great land-owner in the British districts of Tipperah and Sylhet.

Now, the anthropologists rightly caution us against rashly concluding that a common speech, where races are in contact, implies a common origin, since everywhere, and especially among people who use an unwritten language, nothing is more common than the borrowing of a neighbouring tongue. But where, as here, we have five absolutely separate communities of semi-savage people, who nowadays are not so much as aware of one another's existence, and yet speak what is to all purposes the same language, it is plain that they must have been united at no very distant date by some common social bond. The date cannot have been very distant, because in the unwritten speech of semi-savage people phonetic decay acts very rapidly, and a

very few years may serve to disguise the relationships of adjacent and cognate tongues. No one who has heard members of the five branches of the Boḍo race speak their respective, languages can fail to recognise that they belong to the same linguistic group. Moreover, this common Boḍo speech was, till within a few years ago, the language of the Koches, the dominant and ruling tribe in the great Koch kingdom, which survived, with something of its ancient prestige and power, long enough to be visited by an Englishman, Ralph Fitch, in Queen Elizabeth's time. It would seem, then, that the language spoken in the ancient Koch kingdom, which extended from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal, was the Koch or Boḍo language, and the mass of the people must have been of Boḍo origin. In the Brahmaputra valley these Boḍos have survived in the midst of Hindu and Shan invaders and settlers, of whom those who are interested in the subject may read in Mr. E. A. Gait's admirable *History of Assam*, (Calcutta, Thacker, Spink and Co., 1906). Here the anthropologist may come to the rescue of the historian. The Boḍo type of face and physical construction is, as Mr. Endle says, of an Indo-Chinese kind, easily distinguishable from the Arya-Dravidian type common in adjacent Bengal, and careful measurements in the Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys ought to show how far the old Koch element still persists, how far it has been obliterated by inter-marriage with Indian immigrants.

It may, however, be assumed that the population of the Koch kingdom, and therefore of its predecessor, the famous classical empire of Kāma-rūpa, of which Sanskrit scholars may read in the Mahābhārata (perhaps in a late interpolation in the epic) was chiefly Boḍo, of the same type as the humble folk who are the subject of Mr. Endle's book. Kāma-rūpa was visited in the first half of the seventh century of our era by the famous Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsiang, whose interesting account of the land and people may be found at page 22 of Mr. Gait's *History*. "They adore and sacrifice," says the Chinese explorer, "to the Devas and have no faith in Buddha."

It was apparently in the kingdom of Kāma-rūpa that there came into being that form of Hinduism whose scriptures are the later Purāṇas and the Tantras, the worship of Śiva and his

Sakti, that form of the Hindu cult which, to this day and even in the temple of Kāli-ghāṭ in Calcutta itself, is distinguished by sacrifice by decapitation. In the earlier times of British rule, as readers of Mr. Gait's book may find for themselves, the Hindus of Assam were much addicted to human sacrifice by beheading, and, to this day, the appropriate method of propitiating the terrible goddess Kāli, the "dark one" (who is also Dur-gā, "hard of approach"), is by bloody sacrifices. The Śaiva or Śāktā form of Hinduism would therefore seem to be due to an engrafting of Koch superstitions on the purer and humaner religious ideas imported into India by the Aryan settlers to whom we owe the Vedas and the religious literature based on those early pastoral hymns. From this point of view, it is important to bear in mind that the Garos were till lately headhunters, and that the Chutiyas were conspicuous, even in North-Eastern India, for their addiction to human sacrifices.

How does it happen then, it may be asked, that the Boḍos described in this book are among the most innocent and kindly of semi-savage people? The answer seems to be that the bulk of the inhabitants of North-Eastern India were always simple inoffensive folk, and that it was only the ruling tribes and families that were addicted to war, rapine, torture, cruelty, and the religious developments that go with these. If Assam is undoubtedly still the home of the Tantrik beliefs which have their centre at the famous shrine of Kāmākṣā at the old capital of the Koch monarchs (now known as Guā-hāṭi or Gauhati), Assam is also the home of the Viṣṇu-ite reform, an attractive and learned account of which will be found in a paper by Sir Charles N. E. Eliot, published in the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society" for October, 1910. The common people in Assam, the rustic Hindus of the Brahmaputra Valley, are in temperament and habits very like the cheerful and smiling Boḍo folk among whom Mr. Endle laboured, and of whom he writes with such frank regard and appreciation. The climate of the valley is enervating and soft, and any traveller in Assam can see for himself how the once fierce and warlike Ahom invaders, who gave its name to the country of Assam, have become as soft and kindly in disposition as the Kacháris themselves. No more remarkable instance of the effect of environment on national

temperament could be found anywhere, and the anthropological theories of Dr. Ridgeway could hardly have a more remarkable support than he might find by contrasting the semi-savage inhabitants of the Brahmaputra Valley with the bloodthirsty and warlike tribes in the surrounding mountains, their neighbours and relatives.

I have only to say, finally, that I have added, as an Appendix to my old friend's book, a literal interlinear translation of three stories from my little Collection of Kachári Folk-tales. In adding these I have followed the example set by Sir Charles Lyall in his monograph on the Mikirs. By means of this interlinear and word-for-word translation, the comparative linguist may see for himself how far Kachári is still a monosyllabic agglutinative language, and how far it has borrowed the inflectional mechanism of Assamese and Bengali. There has, of course, been mutual borrowing, and I, for one, do not doubt that the syntactical peculiarities of Assamese are largely due to the fact that it is a speech with an Aryan vocabulary spoken by a people who are largely non-Aryan. Any careful reader of the stories in this book can see for himself that the Boḍo spoken in the Kachári *dwars* is the language of a biglot people. Their picturesque agglutinative verb is plainly a survival of days when the language was as monosyllabic as Chinese. But the general structure of the language is now governed by inflections obviously borrowed from Bengali and Assamese.

J. D. ANDERSON.

CAMBRIDGE,
December, 1910.

THE KACHÁRIS

SECTION I

CHARACTERISTICS, PHYSICAL AND MORAL; ORIGIN, DISTRIBUTION AND HISTORIC SUMMARY, ETC.

I. 1. THE people generally known to us as "Kacháris" differ in some material ways from their Hindu and Musulmán neighbours alike in things material and moral. They are certainly not a tall or handsome race, and in general appearance bear some resemblance to the Nepáli, being as a rule shorter and stouter than the people of North-west India, though well fitted to bear up against physical fatigue and hardship. In face and figure they show a distinct approximation to what is known as the Mongolian type, *i.e.*, they have square set faces, projecting cheek-bones, with almond-shaped eyes, and scanty beard and moustache, the last-mentioned being often wanting altogether. In this way they are well fitted for all forms of outdoor (field and factory) labour that require strength rather than skill, and may very reasonably be regarded as the "navvies" of Assam. Characteristics. Physical

2. In mental and intellectual power they are undoubtedly far below their Hindu neighbours; for they possess neither the quickness of apprehension, nor the astonishing power of memory, &c., characteristic of the higher castes among the Hindus. On the other hand, what they do succeed in mastering, often with much toil and painful effort, they digest and retain with much tenacity. Among other social and mental features of character there are two which are seldom wanting to the Mental.

"Kachári": (1) he is an intensely clannish being. A fine imposed on one member of a village community is sometimes paid by the whole body of villagers together. When employed in any considerable numbers on a tea factory, the Kachári labourers so employed, resenting some real or fancied wrong done to *one* of their number, will often leave the garden in a body, even though there may be a month's pay due to every one of them. Again they have (2) no small share of that quality so powerful for good or evil, according as it is guided into right or wrong channels, *i.e.*, a certain strength of will, "what their friends might call firmness, and their enemies might term obstinacy." If they once make up their minds, and they are abundantly capable of doing this, to act in a certain way, it is mere waste of time to attempt to reason them out of their resolution, for nothing short of absolute and overpowering physical force is of any avail to turn them from the course they have once for all resolved to adopt and act upon.

Moral. 3. As regards the moral character of the Kachári race, those who know them best will be the first to speak favourably of them. Like many of the Sub-Himalayan hill tribes, they undoubtedly have a certain weakness for what may be looked upon as their national beverage (*Madh*, *zu*), a form of rice-beer. Of this, in itself a comparatively harmless liquor when taken in moderation, they at times consume very large quantities, especially at weddings, funerals, and at the January and April *Bihu* festivals; and more particularly at what is known as the "first eating of the new rice" (*Nowán bhát khoa*; *Mikham gădàn zánai*), which usually takes place about the middle of December or a little earlier. At this last-mentioned gathering the writer has sometimes seen well-nigh the entire population of a Kachári village *hors de combat* from the effect of over-indulgence in the national beverage. But they are certainly not habitual drunkards, and in this matter Kacháris as a rule would compare not unfavourably with the working man in more civilised lands; *e.g.*, in England. But apart from this particular failing, one almost universal among hill tribes on this frontier, it is pleasing to be able to say that among them are to be found many simple virtues of great price, *i.e.*, honesty, truthfulness, straightforwardness and a

general trustworthiness deserving of all honour. In illustration of their simple truthfulness, even when involving serious consequences to themselves, the writer recalls a story told him some years ago by an officer in charge of the subdivision of Mangaldai, the late A. J. Primrose, I.C.S. A Kachári of Sekhár Mauza was brought before this magistrate on a charge (manslaughter) involving a very heavy penalty, when he without hesitation admitted his guilt, though the evidence against him was of the slightest, or at least utterly insufficient to secure a conviction. The relations of the sexes too are on the whole of a very sound and wholesome character, far more so probably than in many countries boasting of a higher civilisation. Infant marriage is as yet unknown among them, and so far as the present writer has been able to ascertain during the past forty years, the young people are as a rule chaste before marriage and true to their marriage vows in after-life. But it must be clearly understood that all this holds good of the Kachári in his simple, patriarchal, village life, and there only. His innocence is the innocence of ignorance, not the innocence of experience: and he is as a rule free from certain forms of evil because in his village life he has never come under any temptation to indulge in them. When contaminated by civilization, *e.g.*, when brought into contact with our civil and criminal courts, much of this innocence must inevitably disappear; and of this sad deterioration of character any man who has been long in the country, and learnt to know the people well, must have experienced many melancholy and painful illustrations.

II. The origin of the Kachári race is still very largely a matter of conjecture and inference, in the absence of anything entitled to be regarded as authentic history. As remarked above, in feature and general appearance they approximate very closely to the Mongolian type; and this would seem to point to Tibet and China as the original home of the race. The Garos, a race obviously near of kin to the Kacháris, have a tradition that in the dim and distant past their forefathers, *i.e.*, nine headmen, the offspring of a Hindu *fakir* and a Tibetan woman, came down from the northern mountains, and, after a halt at Koch-Behar, made their way to Jogighopa, and thence Origin, &c.

across the Brahmaputra to Dalgoma, and so finally into the Garo Hills. It is not easy to say what degree of value is to be attached to this tradition, but it does at least suggest a line of inquiry that might well be followed up with advantage.[1]

It is possible that there were at least two great immigrations from the north and north-east into the rich valley of the Brahmaputra, *i.e.*, one entering North-east Bengal and Western Assam through the valley of the Tista, Dharla, Sankosh, &c., and founding there what was formerly the powerful kingdom of Kāmārūpa; and the other making its way through the Subansiri, Dibong and Dihong valleys into Eastern Assam, where a branch of the widespread Kachári race, known as Chutiyás, undoubtedly held sway for a lengthened period. The capital quarters of this last-mentioned people (the Chutiyás) was at or near the modern Sadiya, not far from which certain ruins of much interest, including a copper-roofed temple (*Támár ghar*), are still to be seen. It is indeed not at all unlikely that the people known to us as Kacháris and to themselves as Baḍa (Bara), were in earlier days the dominant race in Assam; and as such they would seem to have left traces of this domination in the nomenclature of some of the physical features of the country, *e.g.*, the Kachári word for water (*di*; *dŏi*) apparently forms the first syllable of the names of many of the chief rivers of the province, such as Diputá, Dihong, Dibong, Dibru, Dihing, Dimu, Desáng, Diku (*cf.* khu Tista), &c., and to these may be added Dikrang, Diphu, Digáru, &c., all near Sadiya, the earliest known centre of Chutiyá (Kachári) power and civilisation.

Distribution.

III. But however this may be, there would seem to be good reason for believing that the Kachári (Baḍa) race is a much more widely distributed one than it was at one time supposed to be. They are undoubtedly found well outside the limits of modern (political) Assam, *i.e.*, in North-east Bengal Koch-Behar, &c., and also in Hill Tippera, where the language of the people gives decisive evidence that they are of the Baḍa stock. But apart from these outlying members of the race, there are within the limits of Assam itself at least 1,000,000

[1] Some interesting remarks on this subject will be found in the Garo monograph.—[Ed.]



souls, probably many more, who belong to the Kachári race; though many of the number have of late years become more or less Hinduised, and have lost the use of their mother tongue. These may perhaps be conveniently divided into a (1) Northern and (2) a Southern group, the Brahmaputra being taken roughly as the dividing line, thus:—

Name.	Approximate numbers.	Chief habitat.
I. Northern Group.		
1. Bârâ (Kachári)	272,500	Western Darrang, Kachári Duars, and in North Kamrup.
2. Rábhá (Totalá)	31,370	Goalpara.
3. Mech (Mes)	93,900	Do.
4. Dhimal..............................	(See Bryan Hodgson)	North-east Bengal.
5. Koch................................	10,300	On Northern Frontier from Jalpaiguri to North-west Darrang.
6. Solanimiyas	15–18 families only	Only in Mangaldai Sub-division.
7. Mahaliyas, Phulgariyas, Saraniyas		Western Darrang. All slightly Hinduised Kacháris.
II. Southern Group.		
1. Di-má-sá "big-water-folk"...	15,931	North Cachar Hills.
2. Hojáis	2,750	Do. and Nowgong.
3. Lálungs	40,160	South-west Nowgong and adjoining districts.
4. Garos	150,000	On Garo Hills and at foot of same.
5. Haijongs	8,766	On plains adjoining southern slope of the Garo Hills.
6. Hill Tippera (Tripura) people	105,850	Hill Tippera, &c.

To these may be added one or two smaller communities, *e.g.*, the Moráns and the Chutiyás in Upper Assam, whose language, not altogether extinct as yet though apparently dying out rapidly, would seem to prove them to be closely akin to the Kachári (Baḍa) race.

IV. The only branch of this widely spread race that may be said to have anything like an authentic history is that settled in what is known as the once powerful kingdom of Kāmārūpa (Koch), the reigning family of which is now represented by the Historic Sketch.

Rajas of Koch-Behar, Bijni, Darrang (Mangaldai) and Beltola. But on the history of this (the Western) section of the Kachári race there is no need to dwell, as it was very effectively dealt with some few years ago.[1] But the earliest historical notices of the Eastern branch of the race show that under the name of Chutiyás they had established a powerful kingdom in the Eastern corner of the Province, the seat of Government being at or near the modern Sadiya. How long this kingdom existed it is now impossible to say; but what is known with some degree of certainty is, that they were engaged in a prolonged struggle with the Ahoms, a section of the great Shan (Tai) race, who crossed the Pátkoi Hills from the South and East about A.D. 1228, and at once subdued the Moráns, Boráhis, and other Kachári tribes living near the Northern slope of these hills. With the Chutiyás the strife would seem to have been a long and bitter one, lasting for some 150 or 200 years. But in the end the victory remained with the Ahoms, who drove their opponents to take refuge in or about Dimapur on the Dhansiri at the foot of the Naga Hills. There for a time the fugitives were in comparative security and they appear to have attained to a certain measure of material civilisation, a state of things to which some interesting remains of buildings (never as yet properly explored) seem to bear direct and lasting witness. Eventually, however, their ancient foes followed them up to their new capital, and about the middle of the sixteenth century the Ahoms succeeded in capturing and sacking Dimápur itself. The Kachári Raja thereupon removed his court to Máibong ("much paddy"), where the dynasty would seem to have maintained itself for some two centuries. Finally, however, under pressure of an attack by the Jaintia Raja the Kachári sovereign withdrew from Maibong to Kháspur in Kachar (*circa* 1750 A.D.). There they seem to have come more and more under Hindu influence, until about 1790 the Raja of that period, Krishna Chandra, and his brother Govinda Chandra made a public profession of Brahminism. They were both placed for a time inside the body of a large copper image of a cow, and on emerging thence were declared by the

[1] See "Koch Kings of Kamrup," by E. A. Gait, Esq., I.C.S., Assam Secretariat Press P.O., 1895.

Brahmins to be Hindus of the Kshatriya caste, Bhīma of Mahābhārat fame being assigned to them as a mythological ancestor. Hence to this day the Darrang Kacháris sometimes speak of themselves as "Bhīm-nī-fsā," *i.e.* children of Bhīm, though as a rule they seem to attach little or no value to this highly imaginative ancestry.

The reign of the last Kachári king, Govind Chandra, was little better than one continuous flight from place to place through the constant attacks of the Burmese, who finally compelled the unhappy monarch to take refuge in the adjoining British district of Sylhet. He was, indeed, reinstated in power by the aid of the East India Company's troops in 1826, but was murdered some four years later, when his kingdom became part of the British dominions. His commander-in-chief, one Tulá Rám, was allowed to remain in possession of a portion of the subdivision now known as North Cachar, a region shown in old maps of Assam as "Tula Ram Senapati's country." But on the death of this chieftain in 1854, this remaining portion of the old Kachári Raj was formally annexed to the district of Nowgong.

As regards this last-mentioned migration, *i.e.*, from Maibong to Khászpur about A.D. 1750, and the conversion to Hinduism which soon followed it, it would seem that the movement was only a very limited and restricted one, confined indeed very largely to the Raja and the members of his court. The great majority of his people remained in the hill country, where to this day they retain their language, religion, customs, &c., to a great extent intact. It is not improbable, indeed, that this statement may hold good of the earlier migrations also, *i.e.*, those that resulted from the prolonged struggle between the Ahoms and the Chutiyás. When as a result of that struggle the defeated race withdrew first to Dimápur and afterwards to Máibong, it is not unlikely that the great body of the Chutiyás (Kacháris) which remained in the rich valley of Assam came to terms with their conquerors (the Ahoms) and gradually became amalgamated with them, much as Saxons, Danes, Normans, &c., slowly but surely became fused into one nationality in the centuries following the battle of Hastings. In this way it may well be that the Kachári race were the original autochthones

of Assam, and that even now, though largely Hinduised, they still form a large, perhaps the main, constituent element in the permanent population of the Province. To this day one often comes across villages bearing the name of "Kachárigaon," the inhabitants of which are completely Hinduised, though for some considerable time they would seem to have retained their Kachári customs, &c., unimpaired. It may be that, whilst the great body of the Chutiyá (Kachári) race submitted to their Ahom conquerors, the stronger and more patriotic spirits among them, influenced perhaps by that intense clannishness which is so marked a feature in the Kachári character, withdrew to less favoured parts of the Province, where their conquerors did not care at once to follow them up; *i.e.*, the Southern section of the race may have made its way into the districts known as the Garo Hills and North Cachar; whilst the Northern section perhaps took up its abode in a broad belt of country at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, still known as the "Kachári Duars," a region which, being virtually "Terai" land, had in earlier days a very unenviable reputation on the score of its recognised unhealthiness. And if this view of the matter be at all a sound one, what is known to have happened in our own island may perhaps furnish a somewhat interesting "historic parallel." When about the middle of the fifth century the Romans finally withdrew from Britain, we know that successive swarms of invaders, Jutes, Danes, Saxons, Angles, &c., from the countries adjoining the North and Baltic seas, gradually overran and occupied the richer lowland of what is now England, driving all who remained alive of the aboriginal Britons to take refuge in the less favoured parts of the country, *i.e.*, the mountains of Wales and the highlands of Scotland, where many of the people of this day retain their ancient mother speech: very much as the Kacháris of Assam still cling to their national customs, speech, religion, &c., in those outlying parts of the Province known in modern times as the Garo Hills, North Cachar and the Kachári Duars of North-west Assam.

Final Separation of Northern and Southern

V. It may perhaps be asked how a people so clannish and united as the Kacháris are well known to be, should ever become so widely separated as the Western (Bara) and Southern (Dimásá) sections now undoubtedly are. The separation would seem to be almost final and complete. The writer, *e.g.*, has often tried

to ascertain if the Kacháris of the Northern Duars retained any tradition of ever having been subject to the Raja of Dimápur; but up to the present time no trace of any such tradition has come to light. Intermarriage between the two sections of the race is apparently quite unknown; indeed, the barrier of language would of itself probably go far to prevent such intermarriage: for although the two languages have much in common, yet in their modern form they differ from each other nearly as much as Italian does from Spanish; and members of the two sections of the race meeting each other for the first time would almost certainly fail to understand each other's speech. Perhaps the following tradition,[1] which apparently describes one of the closing scenes in the prolonged struggle between the Chutiyá Kacháris and the Ahoms, may go some way to account for the wide separation between the Northern and Southern sections of the race. The story is as follows:—Long, long ago the Dimásá fought against a very powerful tribe (the Ahoms), and being beaten in a great pitched battle, the king with all his forces retreated. But presently further retreat was barred by a wide and deep river, which could in no way be crossed. The Raja, being thus stopped by a river in front and an enemy behind, resolved to fight once more the next day, unless the problem of crossing the river could be solved. With this determination he went to sleep and had a dream in which a god appeared to him and promised to help him. The god said that early next morning the king with all his people must boldly enter the river at a spot where he would see a heron standing in the water, and walk straight across the river, but no one must look back. Next morning a heron was found, sure enough, standing in the water near the bank; and the king, remembering his dream, led his people to the spot and went into the water, which they found had shoaled enough to form a ford and allow them to wade across. In this way he crossed with a great part of his people. But still all had not crossed. There were some on the other bank and some in the middle of the river, when a man among the latter wondering whether his son was following him, looked back, with the result that the water at once got deep and every one had to

Sections of the race.

[1] Extracted from a most interesting and valuable letter from Mr. Dundas, kindly forwarded for perusal to the writer by B. C. Allen, Esq., I.C.S.

save himself as best he could; while the men on the other bank, having no chance of crossing, dispersed. They who were caught in the middle of the river had to swim for their lives, and were washed down to different places. Some saved themselves by catching hold of *Khágris* (rushes) growing on the bank, and are to this day called *Khágrábária*. Others caught hold of *nals* (or reeds) and are thus called Nalbárias. The Dimásá are the people who crossed in safety.

It is fairly obvious that the Oriental love for the grotesquely marvellous has had no small share in the development of this tradition; but whilst making all due allowance for this, the writer ventures to think that the tradition itself is not altogether without a certain historic value. It probably represents the closing scenes in the protracted struggle for supremacy between the Ahoms and the Chutiyás (Kacháris) when the latter, finally beaten, endeavoured to escape their foes by crossing the Brahmaputra to the South bank, using for that purpose whatever material was at hand, *e.g.*, rude dug-out boats (*khel náu*), extemporised rafts (*bhel*), &c. The student of Assam history will remember that a like mishap befell Mir Jumla's expedition for the conquest of Assam; Rangpur, Ghergaon, &c., when a violent storm or sudden rise in the river carried away or sunk the boats containing his ammunition and other stores, and he was compelled to come to terms with the Ahom rulers. A sudden storm or rapid rise in the river may have prevented many of the fugitives from crossing, and these would perforce have fallen into the hands of the Ahoms. The latter, acting on the principle "Divide et impera," may have forced their captives to take up their abode in the unhealthy (Terai) country now known as the "Kachári Duárs," and further may have prohibited any communication between the two severed fragments of the conquered race, which would thenceforth naturally drift further asunder, until the separation became as complete as it remains to this day.



KACHARI MAN

SECTION II

Social and Domestic Life

In their domestic life, the Kacháris of this district (Darrang) do not differ very materially from their Hindu neighbours, to the subordinate castes of whom they are no doubt very closely allied. The houses are of the usual type, one-storied only, the walls being of *ekrá* reed or of split bamboo, and the roof of thatch fastened by cane. Each hut commonly contains two rooms, one for eating, &c., and the other for sleeping. There is no trace here of the practice which prevails among some tribes of the Province who are undoubtedly very nearly related to the Kacháris, *i.e.*, the provision of bachelor-barracks (*Deká-chángs*), where all the young unmarried men of the village have to sleep apart from the dwellings of settled householders. It is probable, indeed, that this custom formerly obtained here, but all trace of it seems to have passed away long since. **Dwellings, houses, &c.**

A Kachári village is as a rule much more compact than a Hindu one, the houses being built more closely together. Usually, too, there is comparatively little foliage in the way of trees, &c.; and occasionally even something like a street separates the two or more lines of houses which compose a village. One prominent feature in the typical Kachári village cannot fail to strike the attention of any casual visitor at first sight. Each house, with its granary and other outbuildings, is surrounded by a ditch and fence, the latter usually made of *ekrá* reeds, jungle grass or split bamboo, &c. The ditch, some three or four feet in depth, surrounds the whole homestead, the earth taken from it being thrown up on the inner side, *i.e.*, that nearest to the dwelling-house; and on the earth-works, some two or three feet in height, so thrown up are firmly **Villages.**

inserted the reeds or split-bamboo work forming the fence itself, this latter often inclining outwards at a very obtuse angle; so that the ditch and fence are not easily surmounted from the outside by would-be intruders. A Kachári village usually abounds in domestic live-stock of various kinds, *e.g.*, ducks, fowls, goats, pigs, cattle, &c.; and it can hardly be doubted that the fence and ditch above spoken of are largely intended to prevent the cattle, pigs, &c., from getting into the rice-fields at night, and so doing serious damage to the paddy and other crops. With the abundance of live-stock, especially hogs, reared and kept by the Kacháris, it need hardly be said that the villages can scarcely be described as being cleanly; though as a rule they do not differ so much as might be supposed in this respect from their Hindu neighbours, separate buildings being provided for the pigs, goats, &c., at an appreciable distance from the family dwelling-house.

Furniture, Implements and Utensils

Little need be said under this head, as the equipment of the Kachári householder for dealing with domestic or field work is almost identical with that of his Hindu neighbours. But it may be stated that in a Kachári house there will usually be found an exceptionally large number of earthenware vessels (pottery, &c.) which are used freely and frequently in the preparation and distribution of the much-prized rice-beer (*Zu*).

Occupation, crops, &c.

Agriculture is still the great industry of the Kacháris of this district, both the hot weather (*áus*) and the cold season (*sáli*) varieties of rice being largely cultivated, especially the latter. In carrying out this work the people show both application and skill, so much so, that, failing some very overwhelming convulsion of Nature, it would seem to be hardly possible that a famine could take place in the Kachári Duars. This part of the district is abundantly supplied with water by the numerous streams issuing from the lower spurs of the Bhutan Hills, streams which for the most part flow in very shallow beds, and therefore admit of being easily used for irrigation purposes, whenever the seasonal rainfall may be at all scanty. Moreover, the people are especially skilful in the con-

struction of irrigation canals and earthwork embankments for diverting water from river-beds into their rice-fields: and their efforts in this direction are very largely aided by their closely, clannish organisation. Whenever the rainfall threatens to be below the average, the village headman with his associated elders fixes on the spot whence water is to brought from the nearest river to the rice-fields. At this spot very rude and primitive shelters of jungle grass, &c., are put up: and here all the manhood strength of the village, each man armed with hoe, dao, &c., are compelled to take up their abode until the necessary work has been fully carried out. In this way it will be obvious that the Kacháris have a highly efficient and very inexpensive "Public Works Department" of their own; and vigorous efforts of self-help of this character would seem to be worthy of high commendation and hearty support.

But it is not only in constructing embankments and irrigation canals, &c., that the people work together in this way. Very much the same plan is adopted in carrying out other enterprises in the success of which all are alike interested, *e.g.*, in harvesting the great cold weather rice-crop in December and January each year. When this important work is in full swing, it is but rarely that the owner of a rice-field is found cutting his paddy alone and single-handed. He summons his neighbours to come and help him in this work—a summons which usually meets with a ready and cheerful response. It is quite common to see in December and January organised bodies of labourers, varying in number from ten to fifty or more, all in line and busy with the sickle in one man's field at the same time. Every man as a rule works for the time being at high pressure, his toil being lightened by much merry talk and laughter, and many jests and jokes—these last, it must be admitted, not always of a highly refined character. There is a pleasing absence of the mercenary element in the whole transaction; for as a rule no money payments whatever are made to the workers. On the other hand, the wife of the proprietor of the rice-field is almost always present in person, and busies herself in keeping ever ready an abundant supply of wholesome and highly appetising cooked food, to be eaten on the spot, the nearest grove of plantain trees providing ready-

made plates and dishes. Her post is no sinecure, as the hungry reapers make very frequent raids on the good things she provides; and she has above all to be careful to see that the much prized rice-beer (*Zu*) shall be at all times forthcoming in unstinted quantity. Her lord and master is usually content to wield a sickle with the reapers, like Boaz of old; and, of course, he holds himself ready to lend a hand in the same unpaid fashion in carrying out his neighbours' harvesting operations, whenever his services in this direction may be called for. This whole system of mutual help in time of pressure is a marked feature of Kachári social and domestic life, and tends in no small degree to develop and strengthen that clannish temperament of which it may be considered to be in some sense the natural outcome.

Crops, &c. Rice, roughly classified as the larger and the smaller grains (*maimá* and *maisá*), is here, as elsewhere, the chief object of the peasant's skill and labour; but other crops are not wanting, *e.g.*, pulse, gathered in December, cotton, sugar-cane in limited quantities, tobacco, &c. Of this last-mentioned article there are two distinct varieties commonly grown, *i.e.*, country tobacco and Burmese[1] (*Mán*) tobacco, the latter commanding the higher price in the market. All surplus produce finds a ready sale among the ever-growing numbers of imported labourers on tea estates, many of whom are consumers of Kachári rice-beer or less harmless liquors, and who in consequence fraternise readily with their Kachári neighbours. In this way the average Bodo peasant is a very well-to-do person in worldly things, the more so because the Kachári labourer is in great demand as a factory worker. Where there are three or four brothers in a family in Western Assam, it is quite usual for one, perhaps two, of the number to remain at home to cultivate the paternal acres, whilst the other brothers make their way to tea estates in Upper Assam for the manufacturing season, often doing double tasks day after day, and returning to the family fold in the autumn with a large and liberal supply of lightly earned rupees at each man's disposal.

Food, &c. As regards his food, the Kachári is as a rule by no means limited and restricted, like his Hindu and Musulmán neigh-

[1] The Assamese habitually speak of the Burmese people as *Mán*.

bours. On the contrary, he enjoys and practises a freedom in this respect which no doubt goes far to account for his often magnificent physique. With the exception of beef he denies himself almost nothing. His great delicacy is pork; and a Kachári village usually swarms with pigs in almost every possible stage of growth. These animals are often exposed for sale at fairs and markets in the Kachári country. There is, however, one common article of food, which no orthodox old-fashioned Kachári will ever touch, *i.e.*, milk. When questioned as to the ground of his objection to milk as an article of food, he usually says that he is unwilling to deprive the calf of its natural support, though the real reason is probably of another character.[1] This prejudice against the use of milk would now, however, seem to be passing away; and some of the Kachári lads attending the writer's Training Class at Tezpur now partake freely of this natural and sustaining food.

Among other delicacies of the Kachári is what is known as dried fish (*nā grān*),[2] *i.e.*, the very small fish left on the surface of inundated land after the water has subsided. This is collected in large quantities near the banks of the Brahmaputra, and carried northwards to the Kachári Duars, where it is exchanged for rice and silk (*eri*), &c. This small fish is not cured or prepared in any way, but simply dried in the sun; and is very far from being attractive to the eye or the nose, especially to the latter. Nevertheless, it is greatly prized by the Kachári peasant as a welcome and savoury addition to his somewhat monotonous daily fare; nor does the free use of this hardly inviting article of food seem to be attended by any very injurious results to the physical well-being of those who largely and liberally use it.

Hunting, fishing.

The Kachári often varies his diet by adding to it the proceeds of the chase and by fishing in the numerous shallow hill-streams in which his country abounds. Deer and wild pigs are frequently caught, sometimes by the use of large nets, enclosing a considerable extent of grass land in which some keen eye has detected the presence of the much-prized game.

[1] This prejudice is shared by the Garos and by many other members of the Mongolian race.—[Ed.]

[2] *Cf.* the Burmese *ngā-pi*. Query, is the name a corruption of *nā-ghrān*, in allusion to the powerful odour of fish thus dried?—[Ed.]

The net is gradually contracted until the prey comes within the reach of some stout Kachári arm, when blows from club or *dao* speedily bring its career to a close. In this, as in almost all else, the Kachári is clannish and gregarious in what he does; and regular hunting parties are duly organised to carry out the work in hand. Much the same system is observed in conducting fishing operations, though here the leading part is commonly taken by the women. On certain prearranged dates, the women of a village, sometimes of a group of villages, will fish a certain stream, or a number of streams, for a distance extending over several miles. The fishing implements used are of a very simple character, and are commonly prepared from materials found in almost every village. Nets are but rarely employed, as the water in these hill-streams is in the cold weather, *i.e.*, the fishing season, usually very shallow, rarely exceeding two or three feet in depth. The implements commonly used are mainly two, *i.e.*, (1) the *zakhái*[1] and (2) the *pālhā*, the former being employed chiefly, but not exclusively, by women; and the latter by men. Both implements are made of split bamboo work fastened together with cane. The *zakhái* is a triangular basket, open at one end, the three triangular sides closing to a point at the other. The whole is attached to a bamboo handle some three or four feet in length. Grasping this handle firmly, the holder enters the river, usually only two or three feet deep, and lowers the basket to the bottom, keeping the open end in front of her person; and then making a splashing with her feet, she endeavours to drive her prey into the open mouth of the basket, which is then quickly lifted and its contents rapidly transferred to the fish-basket. The system seems to be a very simple and even a clumsy one, but is far from being wholly ineffective. Armed with this *zakhái*, a number of women, sufficient to extend across the entire width of the stream, enter the river together, whilst another party commence operations fifty or a hundred yards away. The two parties work steadily towards each other, so that such fish as are not caught *en route* are gradually driven into an ever-narrowing stretch of water: and as a rule not many fish would

[1] Assamese, *jakái*.—[Ed.]



KACHARI GIRL FISHING

seem to escape. The whole scene is a very merry one, accompanied with much laughter and pleasing excitement; and more particularly, as the two parties of fish-catchers approach each other, and the fish make frantic efforts to escape their doom, the fun becomes fast and furious. A fish-catching expedition of this kind is invariably looked upon as a village holiday, the entire population not infrequently taking an active part in it.

A second popular method of catching fish is the use of the *pālhā*, which is not very unlike an ordinary circular hen-coop. It is made of split bamboo fastened together by cane-work, and is about 4 or 4½ feet in height and about 3 feet in diameter at the base. The upper portion is drawn somewhat closely together, leaving an open space at the top sufficient to allow the admission of a man's hand, the whole structure being quite light and easily manipulated by one hand. Armed with this, the fisherman quietly enters the shallow water at any likely spot, and whenever his quick eye detects the presence of prey, the *pālhā* is at once placed over it, the lower surface of the basket-work closely clutching the ground, and the fish so enclosed are then withdrawn by the hand through the opening in the upper part of the instrument. This too, like the *zakhái*, seems a very primitive, unsuitable contrivance, but in the hands of men trained to its use from earliest childhood it is quite capable of being made to bring about very useful results.

A third instrument used by Kacháris in fish-catching is a small, pointed, metallic spearhead attached to a light bamboo. This is thrust rapidly and firmly into soft mud or other like places where eels, &c., are supposed to be concealed; and the fisherman occasionally succeeds in transfixing and drawing out one or more of these, which form a welcome addition to his daily diet.

Rice-beer (*Zu*), its preparation, &c.

In common with many other non-Aryan tribes on this frontier, *e.g.*, the Nágás, &c., the Kacháris of Darrang habitually consume large quantities of what is usually known as rice-beer (*Zu*, *Záu*). It can hardly be said to be a beverage in daily use, for it is only prepared when specially wanted for immediate consumption. An essential ingredient in the preparation of this most popular form of refreshment is the condiment known

as *emáo*[1] which is usually composed of at least three, and sometimes four, distinct elements. To a definite proportion of husked rice is added (1) the jack-tree leaf and (2) that of the jungle plant known as *bhetai*, and in some cases the poison-fern, though this last-mentioned does not seem to be really necessary. All these ingredients are vigorously pounded together into a powder, which is then passed through a very fine sieve, at least once and sometimes twice. The powder so prepared is then mixed with water so as to make a more or less tenacious paste, and this again is divided into portions sufficient to form solid discs, about three inches in diameter, and one inch thick in the centre, with thin edges. These discs are sprinkled freely with powder from similar discs of some weeks standing, and are for a short time kept covered up in rice-straw. They are then placed on a bamboo platform inside the house for some four days, and are afterwards exposed freely to the hot sun for another four or five days, so as to become thoroughly dry. Finally they find their way into an earthenware water-vessel, which is kept suspended at a distance of several feet over the fireplace though they would seem to need no direct exposure to the action of fire-heat; and here they remain until required for use.

As mentioned above, rice-beer is not used as a daily beverage, but is prepared as required, especially for use at marriages, funerals, harvest homes and other occasions that break the monotony of village life. A common method of preparation is as follows :—A quantity of selected rice, about 3 or 4 seers, is carefully boiled in an iron or brass cooking vessel, the contents of which are then spread out on a bamboo mat and allowed to become cold. Two cakes of the *emáo* described above are then broken up into powder, which is carefully mixed with the boiled rice; and the whole is then stored in a thoroughly dry earthenware vessel (*kalas*). This vessel with its contents is then placed upon a platform some five feet high over a slow fire, in which position it is allowed to remain for some three or four days, the mouth of the vessel remaining open for the first day or two, though it is afterwards covered. It only then remains to

[1] This is what Bengali distillers call *bākhar*. It is usually purchased by them from hill-men.—[Ed.]

add water *ad libitum*, and to pour out the beer, after well shaking the vessel, through a rude straining apparatus composed of rice-straw. It is said that the direct action of fire is not really needed in the preparation of this beer and that exposure to the sun is sufficient for the purpose, though the application of fire undoubtedly quickens the process. Rice prepared in this way may be kept in the earthenware vessel for six or twelve months, a fresh supply of boiled rice and condiment (*emáo*) being added to the old from time to time; but the beer is rarely kept in this way for any very prolonged period, though its quality is said to be improved by such keeping.

It may perhaps be added that the beverage so prepared would seem to be a thoroughly wholesome or at least a comparatively harmless one. Very large quantities are, to the writer's knowledge, sometimes consumed at a sitting, the consumer's brain apparently remaining wholly unaffected thereby. There is, however, a far less innocent beverage, commonly known as *phatiká*, prepared from this rice-beer by a process of distillation. This is a raw fiery spirit, somewhat resembling in taste the crudest possible whisky; and its use might very fittingly be put under severe restrictions by taxation [1] or otherwise, with results most beneficial to the physical, mental and moral well-being of this very interesting race.

Eri silk culture.

One of the chief industries, a very profitable one among the Kacháris, is that of the culture of the silk-worm known as *eri*, and the manufacture of the *eri* cloth. The *eri* cocoons, which are about 2½ or 3 inches in length, may often be seen suspended, a few feet from the ground, in long festoons, a thin cord being passed through the base of the cocoons for this purpose. In this condition the cocoons remain for some fifteen days, at the end of which period the insects make their appearance in the butterfly stage. Before they are able to fly away, they are collected with care and placed in a suitable receptacle; and at the end of three or four days eggs resembling sago-grains make their appearance in great numbers. It is said that one insect can on an average produce from eighty to one hundred such eggs, or even more. In a

[1] Possession, manufacture, and sale of *phatiká* is prohibited by law.—[Ed.]

further period of fifteen days the eggs are duly hatched, the new-born insect being at first almost black, from which colour it passes to brown, and finally to white, at intervals of three or four days; and at each change of colour the worm is said to cast its skin in snake-like fashion. Some four days after the last stage is reached, *i.e.*, about fifteen days after being hatched, the insect may be expected to set about the formation of its cocoon. To assist it in this work, small bundles of plantain or mango leaves are loosely tied together and placed within broad baskets or on bamboo platforms, and the insects are then carefully placed within these bundles; and under favourable conditions the cocoon should be fully formed in about twenty-four hours. The actual formation of the cocoon is preceded by certain signs, very significant to the Kachári, *i.e.*, the insect itself refuses food for a short time beforehand and becomes of a light, brilliant colour; and on handling it gently, a soft, rustling sound, proceeding from the insect itself, can be distinctly heard. After being carefully cleaned in water and dried in the sun, the cocoons are stowed away, usually in an earthenware vessel, until a fitting time, generally in the dry, cold season, appears for reeling them off, a work carried out by women and girls. It is said that a Kachári, working steadily at this occupation, can on an average reel off some 150 or 200 cocoons in a day. During the fifteen days preceding the formation of the cocoon, the insects' quarters must be kept scrupulously clean, and food carefully and regularly provided Its favourite viand is the *eri* (castor oil) plant,[1] which gives its name alike to the insect itself as well as to the silk prepared from its cocoons. But it also feeds freely on the leaves of certain trees known in Assamese as *Kurungá*, *Gámári* and *Sangla*, especially the first named of the three.

The loom employed for weaving the *eri* silk is of very simple construction, and most, if not all, the material needed for the purpose can be provided by the villagers themselves from local resources.

The market value of a loom of this character is said to be about five rupees. It is usually set up on a shady side of the dwelling-house, or, where this is impracticable, a rude structure

[1] *Eranda*: Ricinus communis.—[Ed.]



Kachâri Woman Weaving (Kamrup).



KACHÁRI CLOTHES

of thatch and bamboo work is provided to shield the weaver from the sun. The actual work is always carried out either by the lady of the house, or by one of her grown-up daughters; and it is in every way suitable to women workers, as it requires very little exertion of physical strength, but only a certain quickness and readiness of eye and hand. The conditions under which the industry is carried on are in all respects pleasing and satisfactory. Indeed, a Kachári woman working placidly and contentedly at the *eri* loom, singing quietly to herself in sheer happiness of heart, offers perhaps one of the most complete illustrations of the benevolent influence of the Pax Britannica to be found in the wide realm of India, especially when it is borne in mind that less than seventy years ago these Kachári Duars were subject to the Bhutan Rajas, who seem to have harried and plundered the people in the most cruel and lawless way. Soon after the master of the house, with one or more grown-up sons, has betaken himself to the rice-fields, and this he does almost at sunrise, his goodwife seats herself at the loom, and works away steadily until about 8 or 9 a.m., when she may be seen carrying a well-cooked and appetising meal, carefully shielded from rain and sun by plantain leaves, to her goodman, who from an early hour has been toiling in the fields for the good of the family. This duty discharged, she resumes her position at the loom for the greater part of what may remain of daylight. Immediately in front of the loom there are probably two or three small children (the Kachári race is a wholesomely prolific one) gambolling and tumbling over each other in high delight. To these the mother now and then devotes a word or two of remonstrance, whenever their gambols seem to threaten an infantile breach of the peace; and she may occasionally rise from her seat to administer some little corporal chastisement, though always "more in sorrow than in anger"; but otherwise she devotes herself steadily and assiduously to the work in hand. It is said that a Kachári woman, if not greatly or frequently interrupted in her work, can weave about half a yard each day; and, as this *eri* cloth, woven in long strips about two yards wide, can always command a ready sale at about Rs. 2/- per yard, it will be at once evident that a good worker can in this way, without neglecting other urgent

domestic duties, easily make a substantial addition to the family income.

The fabric itself (*eri* cloth), so produced, is one of great value, especially for use in the cold season, being at once soft and warm as well as remarkably strong and durable. Of its very great merit in this last-mentioned respect (durability) the writer has good reason to hold a very high opinion. Some twelve or fifteen years ago he was presented with a piece of *eri* cloth by one Leah Khángkhuáh, a good Kachári churchwoman, living not far from St. Paul's Mission Church, at Bengbari, whose payment of her "Church dues" (tithe) took this very pleasing and highly practical form. The quantity of cloth given (the donor declined all money payment) was sufficient to make two ample bed-sheets, and in this character they have been in use now for at least a dozen years past. During that period they have of course been subjected to many and frequent barbarous washings; but even the rough treatment they have so often received at the hands of the Assamese *dhobi* has as yet failed to make any impression for injury on the warp and woof of this sound material; so substantial and conscientious is the work done by this good Kachári churchwoman and gentlewoman.

Position, social and domestic, of women. Among the Kacháris women do not perhaps occupy quite the same influential position as seems to be enjoyed by their sisters in the Khasi Hills, where something like a matriarchate apparently holds the field of social and domestic life. Still, with this interesting race the position of the wife and mother is far from being a degraded one. The Kachári husband and householder has neither sympathy with, nor tolerance for, that degrading and demoralising creed "which says that woman is but dust, a soul-less toy for tyrant's lust." On the contrary, he usually treats his wife with distinct respect, and regards her as an equal and a companion to an extent which can hardly be said to be the rule among many of the Indian peoples. Kachári women, both in early life and as matrons, enjoy a large measure of freedom, a freedom which is very rarely abused for evil purposes. On being spoken to on the wayside, the Kachári woman will generally reply at once with absolute frankness, looking the questioner straight in the face and yet with the



Kachári Women Fishing (Kamrup).

From a Photograph by Mrs. H. A. Colquhoun.

most perfect modesty. It has often happened to the writer during the last forty years to enter a Kachári village for preaching purposes, or with a view to opening a school. On asking for the village headman, that personage is usually not slow in making his appearance; and after a few friendly words he will, quite as a matter of course, introduce his wife, and that with no small pride and pleasure. In discharging this social duty, he will very commonly use much the same language as may be heard among the working classes in England. The phrase most common is "Be áng-ni burui," literally "This (is) my old woman." The words are not used jeeringly at all, but with much real respect and affection; and are obviously so regarded by the speaker's life-partner, whose face and features, somewhat homely in themselves, may often be seen to light up at once with a very pleased and pleasing smile on hearing herself thus referred to by the sharer of her life's joys and sorrows. There is, too, another consideration, not perhaps altogether unknown in other parts of the world, which has great weight with the Kachári paterfamilias, viz., that his goodwife for the most part does not a little to provide for the family needs in the matter of food and raiment. Her prowess at the loom has been mentioned before; and besides this, the actual planting out of the young rice-seedlings is for the most part carried through by the women. And all this is habitually done without in any way neglecting or slurring over the usual duties more strictly appropriate to the goodwife and mother.

On the whole it may perhaps be safely said that the social and domestic life of the Kachári is not without its pleasing and satisfactory features. It is probably for the most part far sounder and more wholesome than the life of great cities, whether in Asia or Europe; and it is with no little dismay and sorrow that the writer would see any hasty ill-considered attempts made to supplant or override this simple, primitive, patriarchal life through the introduction of a one-sided, materialistic civilisation.

SECTION III

Laws and Customs

Internal Organisation.

From such information as is available at the present day it seems fairly clear that the internal and tribal organisation of the Kachári (Bara) race rested in early days, very largely at least, on a totemistic basis, although it is only here and there that any real regard for the totems can still be said to survive. In primitive days these subdivisions, all at one time strictly endogamous,[1] were probably very numerous. But in the case of many of these sub-tribes all trace of their distinct existence would seem to have passed away; and no restrictions on the intermarriage of members of such sub-tribes as still survive are any longer recognised. Among septs or sub-tribes whose names still to some extent hold the field may be placed the following:—

1. *Swarga-ároi* (*Swarga* = heaven). The heaven-folk. This sub-tribe is said to be the highest of all; none of its members ever worked as cultivators, for as a rule all *deoris*, *ojhas*,

[1] On this point Col. Gurdon, Hon. Director of Ethnography, Assam, writes as follows:—"I entertain grave doubts as to the correctness of the author's remark that the Kachári totemistic clans were originally endogamous. If it had not been for the most unfortunate death of the author before this work went to press, we might have hoped to have had some light on this obscure point. Amongst the Mech, who are the first cousins of the Kacháris, and who live alongside of them, marriage is exogamous, vide page 124 of the Monograph, so also amongst the Garos, who may be described as second cousins of the Kacháris. Mr. Friel, Sub-Divisional Officer of Mangaldai, which division of the Darrang district contains a large number of Kacháris, met an old Kachári who stated quite positively that 'before the Dewangari war, Kacháris were not allowed to marry within their own sub-tribe.' It is true that Mr. Friel's informant afterwards contradicted himself, but I think it is quite possible his first statement was the correct one. On the other hand, it should be stated in favour of Mr. Endle's theory that three men were found in Sekhar mauza of Mangaldai who stated that in former days 'a penance had to be performed if one married outside one's own *kur*.' My own view, however, is that stated above, and I do not think the statement that the Kachári totemistic clans were endogamous should be accepted without further investigation."

and others who took a leading part in religious ceremonials, were chosen from this subdivision; and the offerings made by worshippers were held to be sufficient for their maintenance.

2. *Basumati-ároi* (*Basumati* = earth). The earth-folk. This clan has a certain privilege not possessed by any other, *i.e.*, its members can bury their dead without in any way purchasing ground for the grave or for the erection of the funeral pyre.

3. *Mosá-ároi* (*Mosá* = tiger), otherwise known in Darrang as *Bāgh-l-aroi* (*Bāgh-l-aroi*, the *l* is probably inserted for reasons of euphony). The tiger-folk. The members of this sub-tribe claim kindred with the tiger, and all the inhabitants of a village peopled by them go into mourning on hearing that a tiger has died in the neighbourhood.

4. *Khángkhlo-ároi.* The *Khangkhlo*-folk. *Khangkhlo* is apparently the name of a certain jungle grass, used freely both at religious ceremonials and at festive gatherings and merry-makings, of which the Kacháris are very fond.

5. *Sibing-ároi* (*Sibing*, sesamum, the Assamese *til.*). The sesamum-folk. This sub-tribe is said to be the only one which in olden time was allowed to cultivate sesamum plant, and its members still hold this plant in special honour.

6. *Gándret-ároi* (*Gándret*, a leech or slug, Assamese *Kumzeluka*). The leech-folk. This sub-tribe holds the leech in high regard and cannot under ordinary circumstances kill it; though on occasions of certain religious ceremonials, *e.g.*, purification after a death in the family, its members were required to chew a leech with vegetables for a certain limited period, though apparently only once in a life-time.

7. *Nárze-ároi* (*nárze*=jute). The jute-folk. This sub-tribe held jute in special honour, and on occasions of great religious ceremonials its members were bound to chew a certain quantity of jute (see No. 6).

8. *Doimá-roi* (*Doimá*=a large river) (*cf.* Dimásá [*doimá-sá*], the usual designation of the people of the North Cachar Hills). The river-folk. These in olden time were the fisherman class, though its surviving members are now merged among the mass of ordinary cultivators.

9. *Bibiziyá-ároi* (*Bibína* = to beg). The begging-folk. Professional mendicants having no fixed home or regular occupation, much like the modern Fakirs, Vairagis, &c.

10. *Bing-bing-ároi* (*Bing-bing*, probably an onomatopoetic word indicating a sound more or less musical). Itinerant musicians, subsisting on the voluntary offerings of those to whom they ministered. The writer has occasionally seen one or two members of this class in Kachári villages.

11. *Ding-ároi* (*dingá* = a bamboo water-vessel [Assamese *Chungá*]).[1] The *dinga*-folk. The members of this sub-tribe are said to have formerly earned their livelihood by making these bamboo water-vessels.

12. *Goi-bári-ároi* (*goi* = the areca-palm [2]). The areca-folk; formerly devoted to the cultivation of the areca, of which they perhaps held the monopoly.

In addition to the above sub-tribes, all at one time strictly endogamous, though now no longer so, the following may be mentioned. It may be noted that these are recognised, in Kamrup at least, mostly to the north of the great earthwork embankment known as the "Gossain Kamla Ali," though the writer has been unable to find any trace of their separate existence in this (Darrang) district.

13. *Rámshároi*. *Rámshá* folk. *Rámshá* is said to be the name of a Mauza in Kamrup.[3] It may be noted further that Rám-sá (? Ram's people) is the name by which the Kacháris living in the plains are known to their brethren in the North Cachar Hills.

14. *Brahm-ároi*. Brahma folk. Said to be a quasi-priestly class, found chiefly in Upper Assam. This name, like the preceding, is obviously of Hindu origin.

15. *Bánhbárá-roi*.[4] Bamboo-grove-folk. (*Bānhbāri* = Assamese) is the sacred bamboo grove, found near many Kachári villages, where the worship of the gods is carried on at certain seasons.

16. *Dhekiábári-ároi*. (Dhekiá fern), the fern-folk. The totem of this sub-tribe was probably the fern, still sometimes used in the preparation of the *fatiká* spirit.

[1] In the Dhubri subdivision there is a place called "Ding-dinga.' Perhaps this takes its name from the sept.—[Ed.]

[2] *Cf.* Assamese, *guā*, betel, to which Guā-hāti, the capital of Assam, is said to owe its name.

[3] Rāmshā is one of the old Mauzas of Kamrup. It is situated close to Gauhati.—[Ed.]

[4] Sanskrit, *vamsa*, bamboo; *vāms-vāri* is the Assamese word for a bamboo grove.—[Ed.]

17. *Máómará-roi.* The Máó-fish folk, perhaps originally the dwellers near the Moamári bil.[1]

18. *Kherkhathá-roi* (*Kerketuá*,[2] squirrel). The squirrel-folk., Said to be a low caste and more or less criminal. One of their functions is to cut the horns of cattle.

19. *Fadam-ároi.* The *fadam* folk. The *fadam* is said to be identical with the tree known as *sáchi* in Assamese.

20. *Mohilá-roi.* Mohilá folk. Mohilá is a word of uncertain origin and meaning. It is said to be the equivalent of Maháldár, and to be applied to fishery lessees, and petty traders in areca-nut and betel-leaves and dried fish (*nā-grān*).

It may perhaps be added that among the Meches in Gowálpárá some sixteen of these subdivisions are recognised, all formerly exogamous.[3] In designating these subdivisions the same suffix (*ároi* or *roi*) is used as that characteristic of the Kamrup and Darrang Kacháris: indeed, the names correspond closely in every respect, *e.g.*—

Swarg-ároi,
Masá-roi,
Doimá-roi,
Goibári-roi,

which seems to be practically identical with class-names Nos. 1, 3, 8 and 12, given above.

But it is among the Dimásá of the North Cachar Hills and the Hojais of the Nowgong district that this minute subdivision of the clans would seem to attain its highest development. In this portion of the Bara race some eighty clans are recognised, of whom forty are known as men's clans (*sengfáng*) and forty as women's (*zŭlu*). All the members of these different clans eat and drink together freely, and are, or were, all strictly exogamous.[4] The only exception to this strict rule

[1] The Moámári or Máomári bil is said to have given its name to the Moamaria faction which gave so much trouble in the time of the Assamese king Gaurinath Singha.—[Ed.]

[2] In adopting a word from the language of their Hindu neighbours (Assamese), the Kacháris often use an aspirated letter where none exists in the original.—S. E.

[3] It is certainly strange that amongst the Meches, who are kinsmen of the Kacháris, the sub-tribes are exogamous, whereas the Kachári sub-tribes are said by the author to have been originally endogamous.—[Ed.]

[4] *Cf.* the case of the Mech sub-tribes.

of exogamy is that of the so-called royal clan, known as Há-chum-sá,[1] *i.e.*, "black earth folk," all the members of which were compelled to marry *within* their own sub-tribe, marriage with a member of a subject clan being of old absolutely forbidden. (*Cf.* the analogous restrictions enforced by various "Royal Marriage" Acts in other communities.)

In partial explanation of the terms used (their number might probably be largely added to on further inquiry), it will be observed that the first two are obviously of Hindu origin, the Kachári affix *ároi* (people, folk) being attached to the Sanskrit words *Swarga* and *Vasumati* respectively. Most of the designations applied to the other sub-tribes merely indicate the occupation, probably hereditary, by which the members of these sub-tribes obtained their livelihood. But in almost every case, in these modern days, any special reverence for the totem has very largely become a thing of the past. There is, perhaps, one exception to this rule, that of the tiger-folk (*Mosároi* or *Bāghlároi*). (The *l* in this latter word is probably merely euphonic, so that the two words have exactly the same meaning). Kacháris of the old-fashioned conservative school still think it a duty to show respect to their totem (the tiger) by formally going into mourning whenever they learn that one of these animals has died in the immediate vicinity of their village. The period of mourning is indeed but a short one, seldom exceeding twenty-four hours; but during this brief period the sorrowing would seem to be very real, and not a little material loss is sometimes involved. No solid food whatever must be taken, in itself no slight privation to the Kachári, who is as a rule provided with an ample appetite. At the end of the mourning the floor and walls of each house must be carefully smeared with a freshly prepared compost of mud and cow-dung, a work usually carried out by the women. All articles of clothing, as well as all household utensils made of brass, must be thoroughly cleansed in running water, whilst all earthenware vessels except those which are quite new and have never yet been used for cooking purposes, must be broken up and thrown away. Then one of the elder members of the

[1] Há, earth; chum (-gă-chúm), black (*cf.* Dimá gá-chum, black-water); sá, folk, people.

community, acting as Deori (minister), solemnly distributes the "water of peace" (*Śánti-Jal*)[1] to be drunk by all in turn; and the buildings themselves and all articles of clothing, &c., are freely sprinkled with this preparation. The service is finally consummated by the sacrifice of a fowl or pig, to be partaken of by all in common; after which relations of ordinary social intercourse with the neighbours may be quietly resumed.

Marriage, Endogamy, Exogamy

It is said that each of the sub-tribes mentioned above was in early times strictly endogamous; for though members of all these subdivisions might freely eat and drink together, intermarriage between them was absolutely forbidden. But all such restrictions on marriage seem to have passed away long since, so that the whole subject has nowadays little more than an antiquarian interest.

No formal hypergamy is recognised, though Kacháris occasionally take wives from the cognate tribes known as Rábhas (Totlás), Koches (Madáhis), and Saraniyas, &c. But such alliances are as a rule not looked upon with favour, and the bridegroom in such cases has generally to make his peace with his fellow-villagers by providing them with a feast in which rice-beer (*Zu*) and pork are certain to take a prominent place. Children born of such mixed marriages become in all cases members of the father's subdivision of the Bodo race.

There is little or nothing specially distinctive in the laws of consanguinity or affinity in their bearing on the marriage relationship. A widower may marry his deceased wife's younger sister, but not the elder, whom he is taught to regard conventionally in the light of a mother. Much the same principle holds good in the case of the re-marriage of widows, which is freely permitted, the one limitation being that a widow may marry her deceased husband's younger brother, but not the elder.

[1] "Śánti-Jal," water of peace (reconciliation), usually prepared by immersing in water leaves of the Tulsi plant, Dub grass, cow-dung, rice, &c. Money is sometimes added in the form of small silver coins (four-anna bits) or even rupees; and rings, or other personal ornaments, are sometimes thrown into this "Śánti-Jal."

Polygamy

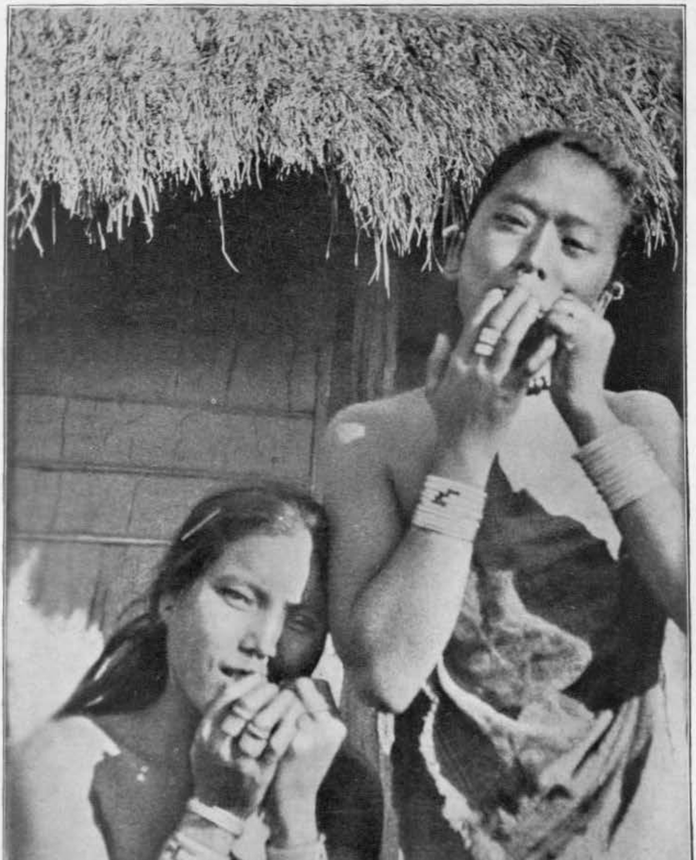
As a rule the Kacháris are a strictly monogamous race, though cases of men having two wives have occasionally come under the writer's notice. These cases are, however, almost invariably limited to men of a somewhat high social position or great wealth, such as Mauzadárs, Mandals, &c. Where, too, a first wife proves childless, Kachári custom sanctions the taking of a second, mainly with a view to handing down the father's name to posterity. On the other hand, polyandry would seem to be absolutely prohibited, though it is known to prevail in the adjoining regions of Bhutan, Tibet, &c.

Adoption

Children, more especially orphans, are occasionally adopted, usually by near relatives, but sometimes by absolute strangers. In such cases the children so adopted are treated as full members of the family, and the foster-parents are considered by the community to have done a highly meritorious act. Several pleasing instances of adoption of this character have come under the writer's notice, and in all such cases the adopted children seem to have found a very happy home.

Female Chastity

As stated above, the standard of chastity among the Kacháris, both men and women, is by no means a low one. As a rule the young people, in the villages at least, lead pure lives before marriage, and are faithful to their marriage vows in after-life. In cases where there are several unmarried girls in a family, and one of them is suspected of having broken the law of chastity, the following plan for detecting the offender is sometimes adopted. The whole family gathers in the evening around the sacred *siju* tree (*Euphorbia splendens*), which is often to be seen growing in the court-yard, surrounded by a fence of split bamboo. At the foot of this revered tree a quantity of rice (uncooked) is solemnly buried and allowed to remain there over night. Early next morning this rice is carefully disinterred, and a certain quantity given to each grown-up girl (*sikhlá*) to be masticated. The offender, under the pressure of the fear of



KACHÁRI GIRLS PLAYING JEW'S HARP (Gongina).
From a Photograph by Mrs. H. A. Colquhoun.

imminent detection, is unable to masticate her portion of rice, the faculty of secreting saliva failing her in her terror of discovery and disgrace.

She is then made to disclose the name of her paramour, whom Kachári public opinion compels to marry his victim forthwith, the bride-price (*pan*: see below) being in this case considerably enhanced as some slight compensation to the girl's parents for the injury done to the honour of the family. A similar procedure is sometimes resorted to in cases of suspected theft or other like misdemeanours in the family circle.

In some cases where the parents are unwilling to part with their daughter to a prospective son-in-law of somewhat objectionable character, the matter is referred for decision to the village elders, who impose a fine of Rs. 20/- to Rs. 25/- on the offender. But whenever pregnancy follows offences against the law of chastity, marriage becomes absolutely compulsory, and the seducer is made to feel that he has brought disgrace upon the village, and is distinctly under a cloud. In this way a wholesome respect for chastity is maintained, and Kachári domestic life is kept comparatively pure.

Divorce

Divorce sometimes takes place by mutual consent, but cannot be effected without a certain formality. Man and wife appear before the village elders and state their case, concluding by tearing a pan-leaf into two pieces, *fáthoi fesínai, (K.) pán chirá* (Assamese), a symbolic act indicating that, as the sundered leaf can never reunite, so their own married life is severed for ever. Should the husband divorce his wife for causes which seem to the village elders inadequate or capricious, he forfeits all claim to reimbursement of his marriage expenses, and even when the divorce is approved of, he must pay a certain small sum (Rs. 5/- to 10/-) for his freedom, the amount being divided between the village *pancháyat* and the divorced woman. On the other hand, if the woman is divorced for just and sufficient reasons, *e.g.*, for unfaithfulness to her marriage obligations, the injured husband is entitled to recover whatever he may have expended at his marriage, a sum amounting sometimes to Rs. 140/- or upwards to Rs. 200/-. The man who may afterwards marry the

divorced woman is held to be responsible for the payment of this money; and so long as this latter condition is duly fulfilled, the divorcée is fully at liberty to live with a second husband.

Inheritance of Property

Among the Kacháris the laws and customs relating to the inheritance of property seem to be very vague, and it is not at all easy to obtain any definite information on the subject. Generally speaking, on the decease of the head of the household the eldest son takes charge of all property, making a home for the time for his widowed mother and his brothers and sisters. In this way the family may be kept together for some years; but eventually it breaks up as the children grow up and marry, in which case the father's property is broken up into equal shares, the eldest son taking one share and a half, while what remains is divided fairly among the other brothers. The daughters, especially if married, can claim nothing. When a man dies without sons, the property usually passes to his eldest surviving brother, who generally makes some provision for the deceased man's widow and daughters.

Disputes, whether matrimonial or otherwise (*e.g.*, inheritance of property, &c.), are almost invariably referred to the council of village elders, whose members are not necessarily limited to five or other definite number; and the decision of this rural council is very rarely questioned or opposed in any way. It might be well to develop and enlarge this simple and very effective way of settling disputes, so that the villagers may be to a great extent saved from the necessity of coming under the contaminating, demoralising influence of our civil and criminal courts. As all the Kacháris of this district (Darrang) are ordinary cultivators, holding land directly under Government like their Hindu and Musulman neighbours, no remarks are needed under the head of "tenure of land, and laws regarding land." So too with the sections dealing with "war, and head-hunting," it is only necessary to say that the latter practice (head-hunting) is quite unknown here, though it would seem to have been very common in earlier days among the closely cognate race known to us as Garos.

SECTION IV

RELIGION

General character of popular beliefs.

THE religion of the Kachári race is distinctly of the type commonly known as "animistic," and its underlying principle is characteristically one of *fear* or *dread*. The statement "*Timor fecit deos*" certainly holds good of this people in its widest and strictest sense; and their religion thus stands in very marked, not to say violent, contrast[1] with the teaching of the Faith in Christ. In the typical Kachári village as a rule neither idol nor place of worship is to be found; but to the Kachári mind and imagination earth, air, and sky are alike peopled with a vast number of invisible spiritual beings, known usually as "Modai," all possessing powers and faculties far greater than those of man, and almost invariably inclined to use these powers for malignant and malevolent, rather than benevolent, purposes. In a certain stage of moral and spiritual development men are undoubtedly influenced far more by what they *fear* than by what they *love*; and this truth certainly applies to the Kachári race in the most unqualified way. The Kachári Duars of this district (Darrang) were in earlier days looked upon as being especially unhealthy, and to some extent they retain that character still. It has repeatedly fallen to the lot of the writer, when entering a Kachári village to find one or more of its inhabitants prostrate with malarial fever of a virulent type; and on asking what was wrong the reply has very commonly been "*modai*[2] *hāmdang*," *i.e.*, an (evil) spirit has got

[1] See S. Matt. xxii. 37, or (what was written many centuries earlier) Deut. vi. 5, "Thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God with all thy heart."

[2] *Modai* (Assamese: *deota*, *devta*), a god, spirit, &c. *Hām-na* (Hindustani *pakar* or Assamese *dharna*): to catch, lay hold of, &c. Hence "*Modai hāmdang*, an (evil) spirit has seized (me)," "got hold (of me)."

hold (of me). And this reply may be looked upon as typical and characteristic, and as accurately expressing the very spirit and true inwardness of Kachári religion. Of sin, *i.e.*, the conscious violation of the moral Law of a righteous God, the Kachári has of course no idea whatever. But he does believe in the existence and active interference in the affairs of men of certain invisible spiritual beings who are the authors of sickness, famine, earthquakes, &c.; who are for the most part influenced by malevolent motives, and whose ill-will towards mankind must be propitiated and bought off by frequent offerings of rice, plantains, pigs, goats, poultry, &c., in ways regarding which some little information is given below.

Worship of ancestors.

1. Ancestor-worship would not seem to be in vogue to any extent among the Kacháris of this district, though perhaps it is not altogether unknown; *e.g.*, when the head of a family or other man of note passes away, it is not unusual at certain festivals to place on a platform a small quantity of the viands of which the deceased was known to be fond during his lifetime on earth, presumably for his use and behoof. No adult members of the village community will ever presume to touch these viands, though the village children are apparently at liberty to consume them at their pleasure.

Worship of natural forces.

2. The worship of natural forces also would seem to be not at all common, though some traces of it may perhaps be noted here and there. For instance, (A) in connection with the popular festival known as the April (Vaisákh) *Bihu*, there takes place what is called the "*Párwa*" show or *bhotheli*, a festival apparently common to Hindu and Kachári alike. The *parwa* is a tall bamboo pole draped with rags, flags, &c., taken from the village on the last day of the *Bihu*, and put up in a field alongside a tree, where the people amuse themselves by dancing, wrestling, and tom-toming, &c., around it. It is possible that this may be a relic or survival of phallic worship, the *parwa* taking the place of the lingam or phallus. (B) Again, water would seem to have about it something of a sacred character in the mind of the average Kachári. The dead are often buried or cremated on or near the banks of running streams, which are also favourite localities for the celebration of the greater *pujas*. This reverence for water is perhaps specially marked

among the Kacháris of North-east Bengal (Jalpaiguri, &c.), in which part of the Province, Mr. Bryan Hodgson informs us, all the smaller streams are regarded as a kind of lesser deities (*dii inferiores*), whilst the Brahmaputra is looked upon as the *mother* of them all (*mater magna*). It may be noted also in this connection that one of the principal branches of the widely spread Bara race, *i.e.*, the people of the North Cachar Hills, still speak of themselves as *Di-má-sá*, *i.e.*, "sons of the big river," or "children of the great water," even though none of them would seem now to dwell anywhere near a large river or lake, &c. It may therefore perhaps be safely inferred that the element of water, though now apparently not often actually worshipped, has ever been held in special regard by the Kachári race.

Worship of deities.

The Kachári Pantheon is a very extensive one, though it seems probable that only a comparatively small number are strictly of tribal or national origin, many having obviously been borrowed from their Hindu neighbours. The popular Kachári deities fall naturally into two classes, *i.e.*, (1) household gods (*nă-ni madái*); (2) village gods (*gámi-ni madái*).[1] The former are worshipped *inside* the house, or at least in the homestead (compound); the latter by the whole village collectively, *outside* the house, and usually near the sacred grove of trees or bamboos, often to be seen some fifteen or twenty yards from the village, and known as the *thānsāli*. A long list of these gods is given in an interesting paper by Maulvi Mahibuddin Ahmed, some nineteen names of household gods being therein enumerated, whilst the village gods number no fewer than sixty-five. Only a small proportion of these deities would, however, seem to obtain recognition in this district (Darrang), and it hardly seems necessary to mention by name more than a few of them.

A. *Household Deities.*

Among the household deities may be placed the following:—

1. Báthău brai, old Báthău.

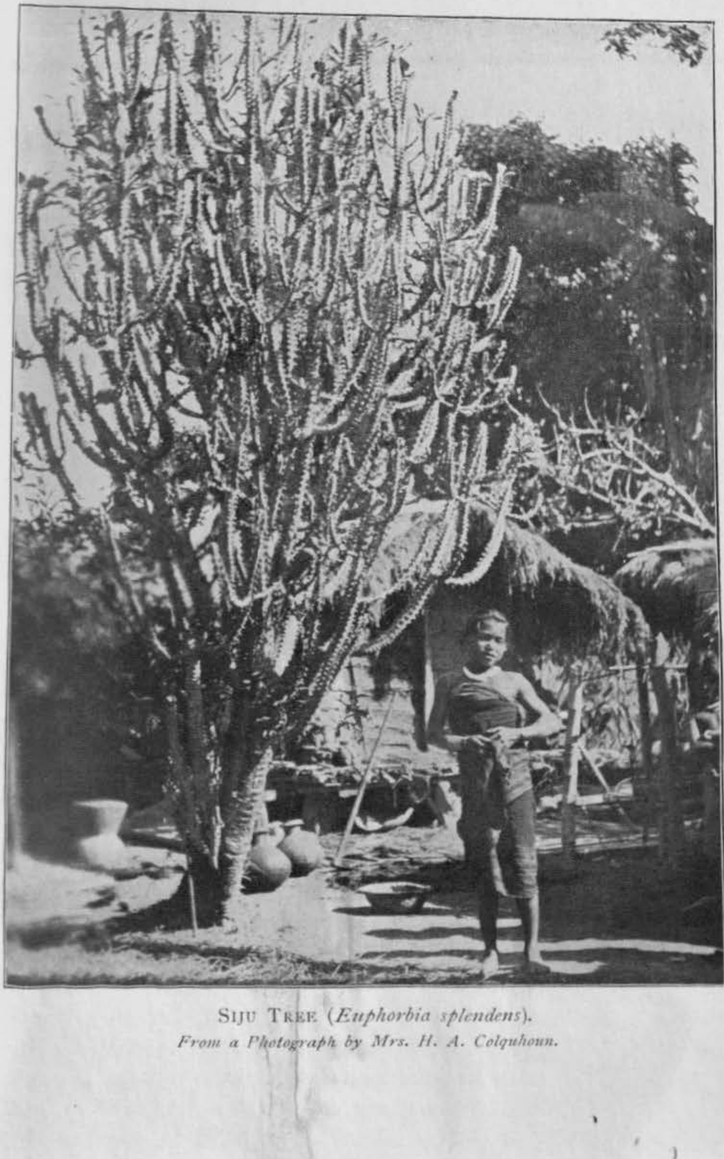
[1] *Nă*, house (*ghar*). *Gámi*, village (*gáon*).

2. Mainão, otherwise known as Bhulli Buri, and looked upon as Báthâu's wife.
3. Áśu Mainâo.
4. Śáli Mainâo.
5. Song Rájá.
6. Song Brái.
7. Burá Bágh Rájá, &c., &c., &c.

1. Báthâu (*Siju*, i.e., *Euphorbia splendens*).

Of these household gods by far the most important is the first-mentioned, *i.e.*, Báthâu, who is pre-eminently the guardian of the family interests and family honour. He is never represented in idol form, but is well in evidence through his living symbol, the *siju* (*hiju*) tree (*Euphorbia splendens*), which is often to be seen in the Kachári homestead surrounded by a circular fence of split bamboo. Among the Meches of Goalpara, almost every home, it is said, has its *Báthâu* (*siju*), though in Darrang it is less frequently met with. Báthâu is said not to be worshipped separately, but always in conjunction with Ai-Deo. Inside the house a slightly raised altar, called *dhám*, is often erected in honour of Song Rájá, and at this women especially pay their devotions and make offerings, particularly at the monthly periods (menses). All offerings, however, made to Song Rájá are finally brought outside the house, and laid at the foot of Báthâu; and the writer has often seen such offerings in the form of heads of goats, pigs, fowls, &c., as well as plantains, *támul*-nuts, *pán*-leaves, *gazi* (*i.e.*, a mixture of rice and pulse), &c., humbly laid down for Báthâu's acceptance. In this way it is held that disease, famine, and misfortunes of all kinds may be kept at bay, through the influence of this powerful guardian of the family interest and well-being.

It may be added that it is apparently only among the northern section of the Kachári race that the *siju* tree is regarded with special reverence. The Garos are said to know this tree and to use certain parts of it for medical purposes *e.g.*, the preparation of poultices, &c.; but to them it is never an object of worship. The Dimásá of the North Cachar Hills,



SIJU TREE (*Euphorbia splendens*).
From a Photograph by Mrs. H. A. Colquhoun.

on the other hand, seem to have no special regard for the *siju* or any other tree.

2. Mainào (Ceres).

Only second to Báthàu is his good consort, Mainào, though, unlike her husband, she has no special emblem visible to the human eye. Her special function is that of "Guardian of the rice-fields";[1] and among a purely agricultural community like that of the Kacháris, she of course is held in very high regard. She is, in short, to the Kachári peasant very much what Ceres was to the old heathen Roman cultivator. Eggs are the offering that finds most favour in her eyes, and these are presented to her in unstinted quantity. She is apparently especially worshipped at the period of harvesting the *áśu* and *śáli* crops; hence the twofold designation given above (Nos. 3 and 4, household gods), Ásu Mainào, and Śáli Mainào.

Of the other domestic deities above mentioned, it is not necessary to say much. Nos. 5 and 6 (Song Rájá and Song Brái) seem to be the especial objects of devotion to women, worshipped for the most part inside the house, whilst No. 7 (Burá Bágh Rájá) is apparently merely the name of the tiger, often spoken of with bated breath as the "monarch of the woods" (*banar-rájá*), especially by men travelling at night, when danger from the tiger may well be apprehended.

B. *Village Deities.*

There would seem to be little need to dwell much on the village deities; for no small proportion of them have evidently been adopted from the Hindu Pantheon, as will be obvious from the names given below. Some sixty-five such names are given in the valuable paper above mentioned of village deities recognised in Kamrup, though the writer only knows of some three or four of these gods as reverenced in this

[1] It is probable that her great function, *i.e.*, guardianship of the paddy field, is indicated by her name; for *mai*=paddy (Assamese *dhán*); and *na* (*náo*)=to watch over, keep (Assamese *rakha*): hence *mai-náo*="the protector of the rice-fields."

district (Darrang). Among these may perhaps be mentioned the following:—

1. Mero rájá.
2. Burá Mahádeo.
3. Burá gosain.
4. Jal Kubér.
5. Thal Kubér.
6. Ih Kubér.
7. Bih Kubér.
8. Kuber brai (masculine).
9. Kuber brui (feminine).
10. Sila Rai, &c., &c., &c., &c.

It is needless to continue the list, for almost all the names are obviously borrowed from popular Hinduism; *e.g.*, Kuber is almost certainly the Hindu god of wealth and of the lower regions (Pluto). Others are in all likelihood merely names of deified mortals of some pre-eminence above their fellow men; *cf.* Ram, Krishna, &c. A notable illustration of this principle of deification is probably that given as No. 10 in the above list, *i.e.*, Sila Rai.[1] This is almost certainly the name of the well-known Commander-in-Chief of the most famous of the Koch Kings, Nar Narayan, in whose time the Koch kingdom reached the zenith of its power. As a soldier and commander this man (Sila Rai) seems to have been the foremost captain of his time in North-east India; and his striking personality would seem so to have impressed the minds and imaginations of his contemporaries as to lead to his apotheosis after death.

As might be expected among a purely agricultural community, the great annual *pujas*, which are three in number, are directly connected with the ingathering of the three chief rice crops of the year, *i.e.*, the Áhu, Pharma, and Śáli crops The dates for these annual *pujas* do not seem to be at all rigidly fixed, but are apparently settled by the village elders to meet the public convenience. There is no prescribed form of religious worship; indeed, the whole gathering is rather of the nature of a village merry-making than a religious service; and there is invariably a very large consumption of the national beverage (rice-beer) at all these gatherings.

[1] See "The Koch Kings of Kamrup," by E. A. Gait, Esq., I.C.S.

There is said to be another *puja* known as *morong-pujá*, of which the special object is to propitiate the cholera demon, to whom are made offerings of he-goats, pigeons, fowls and betel-nuts, &c. In addition to these, flowers, eggs, pounded rice-flour, &c., are sometimes placed on rafts and set afloat on a river; and occasionally animals (goats, &c.) are exposed in this way on rafts as an oblation to the river god (*dŏi-ni madai*).[1] It may be taken for granted that, whenever these rafts are found on streams in the Kachári country, cholera or other malignant disease is or has been doing its deadly work among the people. In addition to the *pujas* above mentioned, which are more or less of a general character, offerings of goats, chickens, and a mixture of pulse and rice known as *gazi*, are often placed at the foot of certain trees, usually old trees, and finally left there. As a rule, only the *heads* of the goats, chicken, &c., so offered will be found at the foot of such trees, the bodies of the slaughtered animals being consumed by the offerers. These oblations are made, not by the village community as a whole, but by the heads of individual families, some one member of which is in severe trouble from sickness or other like cause. The money value of such offerings is sometimes not inconsiderable.

Priesthood

There is no authorised priestly caste among the Kacháris, nor are Brahmins ever employed in their religious ceremonies, these latter indeed being generally of a social, and even festive, rather than a religious character. In Kamrup, however, one of the recognised sub-tribes is, or was, known as "Brāhmarŏi," a name which seems to point to Brahmins as having a certain standing in the Bådå community. All religious offices are now discharged by *Deoris* or *Deodáis*, who are usually men of a certain age and recognised social position in the village community; village elders in fact. The office is not hereditary, and any one versed in the usual forms of exorcism, &c., can discharge it. Another class of persons employed in religious

[1] I have seen such a *puja* on the Manas river. The principal offering to the river god was a duck.

ceremonies is known as the *Ojhá* or *Ojhá-Burá*, who is generally armed with shells, cowries, &c., by the manipulation of which he professes to be able to foretell prosperity or the reverse to those who consult him. These officials are supposed to be competent to deal with the ordinary ailments of village life by indicating the approximate method of propitiating the offended deity (*modai*), whose anger is held to be the cause of all the ills that flesh is heir to.

But in times of special emergency, *e.g.*, plague, pestilence, famine, &c., the services of the "possessed" woman,[1] the *Deodáni*, are called into action for a special *puja* organised on a somewhat large scale. These gatherings are not very common, but when they do occur the order of the proceedings is something as follows, as occasionally witnessed by the writer. A piece of ground about fifteen or twenty yards square, usually on the bank of a running stream, is selected for the purpose. The surface of the soil is carefully removed, and a rude screen of cotton cloth some six or eight feet high erected on bamboos at the western side of the cleared ground. At the eastern side a slight earthwork embankment, some three or four inches high and about a foot broad is thrown up; and on this a number of figures, usually seven or nine, but always an *odd* number, bearing a rude resemblance to the outlines of the human form, are placed in an upright position. These figures are roughly made of jungle grass twisted together, and are about one foot in height. Before each figure is placed a layer of the plantain tree with its concave side upwards, and in this are deposited the heads of slaughtered goats, pigeons, chickens, with salt, sugar-cane, plantains, *gazi* (a mixture of rice and pulse), &c., the whole being freely sprinkled with blood and pounded rice flour (*pitháguri*). The *Deodáni*, a somewhat weird-looking figure, with dishevelled hair, and vermilion-stained forehead, wearing a long petticoat, dances up and down to and fro before these figures, keeping time roughly with the music of cymbals and tom-toms played by four or five men, who act as her assistants. The ceremony is a prolonged one, often extending over many hours: and the *Deodáni*, whose faculties are apparently quite absorbed in what she is doing and who seems

[1] *Cf.* St. Luke's account of the "Pythonissa," Acts xvi. 16–18

for the time to be lifted above the world of time and sense, gradually works herself up to a state of excitement bordering on frenzy. At this stage, which is only slowly attained, a goat is brought forward and taken up before one of the figures above mentioned, when the *Deodáni*, with one stroke of the long sacrificial sword, known as the *imfi* and reserved exclusively for such purposes, severs the victim's head from the body. Most of the blood is held to be offered in sacrifice to the *madái*, before whose emblem the animal has been slaughtered; but some part is said to be sprinkled on the persons of the assembled worshippers. It is at this climax of the *puja*, *i.e.*, at the sacrificial slaughtering of the goat, that the *Deodáni* is supposed to become possessed of the knowledge she is in search of, *i.e.*, the name of the offended deity who has brought about the plague, &c., and also the best method of propitiating his anger; which usually involves an offering of pigs, goats, &c., to the angered god, and the giving of a feast to the whole village community, the expense being defrayed by a general contribution.

1. *Ceremonies Attending Birth.*

In a Kachári village community there would seem to be no formally recognised midwives (*dhàis*), any respectable and competent matron being at liberty to give attendance and assistance to the patient in such cases. In severing the umbilical cord no scissors, knife, or other implement of steel is ever used, nor is the severance effected at one stroke, but in a succession of slight cuts, *seven* such cuts being made in the case of a girl, and only *five* in that of a boy. The cutting instruments consist of thin hard strips of bamboo,[1] shaped roughly into the form of a knife; and a separate bamboo knife must be used in making each slight cut, seven such knives being thus made use of for a female child and five for a male. It is not unusual for one of the bystanders to give a name to the newly-born child at the severing of the umbilical cord. The good matron who officiates as midwife receives no money payment for her services, but on the mother becoming convalescent a feast is given at the

[1] *Cf.* Khasi birth custom, p. 124, "The Khasis."—[Ed.]

parent's expense, in which pork and other flesh meat is always present in abundance; and at this feast the officiating midwife is accorded the place of honour, as some recognition of the value of her kindly ministrations in her neighbour's hour of trial and need.

For about a month or six weeks, (the period seems to vary within these limits) after giving birth to a child, the mother is held to be technically "unclean," and is subjected to certain social and religious limitations; *e.g.*, she may not approach the *dhám* or domestic altar commonly found inside a Kachári's dwelling-house, and on which she is ordinarily in the habit of making offerings of eggs, chickens, &c., in times of trouble. This period of *ceremonial* uncleanness is usually terminated by the use of the water of peace (*śánti-jal*). The *deori* freely sprinkles the mother as well as the house and its contents with this holy water, after which she is fully at liberty to resume social intercourse with her neighbours.[1]

Naming.

There does not seem to be any special principle underlying the giving of names to children, nor do such names as a rule resemble those of their fathers. Like some of the lower castes among their Hindu neighbours, children often take the name of the day or the month in which they were born.[2] Hence we often find such names as Deobar, Mangal, Budhu, as also Mághuá, Pháguná (names of months), &c., in use among the Kacháris. Other names are obviously adopted from the Hindus, *e.g.*, Gangá Rám, Sáti Rám, &c. Others, again, were probably given by the mother in infancy expressive of some peculiarity in the new-born child's mental or physical temperament. Of this type, probably, is a very common name, "Khángkhoá," *i.e.*, the "voracious one," the "great eater."[3] Another illustration is the name Gáb-grá, *i.e.*, the weeper, the crier, &c., &c. In short, any unusually

[1] *Cf.* the Jewish ceremonial described in Leviticus, xii.

[2] *Cf.* the well-known instance of "man Friday" in *Robinson Crusoe*.

[3] It will be remembered that the Kacháris are sometimes spoken of as "Children of Bhim" (Mahabharat), who is said on one occasion to have eaten up *unaided* the meal provided for himself and his four brothers.

prominent physical peculiarity is often seized upon to become the name by which the child is known throughout his whole after-life.

3. *Marriage.*

A. The marriage contract.

From certain scattered scraps of information on the subject that have incidentally come to the writer's knowledge during the past forty years, it would seem that *marriage by capture* was largely, if not universally, in vogue among the Kacháris in earlier days. Some traces of this practice would seem to survive in the ordinary marriage ceremonial which still to a large extent holds the field. A case somewhat of this character came to the writer's knowledge some twenty-five or thirty years ago. A young Kachári, employed as a village pandit some thirty miles from Tezpur, carried off a girl from the house of her parents some ten miles away. No actual violence apparently occurred in the matter, and very likely there had existed for some time previously a private understanding between the two young people concerned. But what was done clearly had not the approval of the girl's parents; for these latter laid a complaint on the subject before the writer, and claimed redress for the wrong done to them. When the offending pandit was called to account for his conduct, he simply pleaded in defence that what he had done was quite in accordance with the time-honoured custom of his forefathers: and on payment of the usual bride-price, at a somewhat enhanced rate, the parents raised no further objection to their daughter's union with the pandit.

But in modern times "marriage by capture" is rapidly passing out of vogue, if indeed it be not already absolutely a thing of the past; and the marriage contract is usually entered into in one of the four following ways:—

(*a*) The young people occasionally take the matter into their own hands, as in the case above mentioned, ignoring the wishes of their parents on either side. This procedure is looked upon by the community as blameworthy and irregular, but not invalid. The bride's parents claim an immediate payment of Rs. 5/- from the bridegroom, and also exact the bride-price at a higher rate than usual. But if these conditions are duly

complied with, no further objections are as a rule made to the union.

(*b*) The more usual practice is as follows. When the son of the house attains a marriageable age, *i.e.*, from fifteen to twenty years, his parents at once set to work to find a suitable bride for him. Having made their choice, they pay a visit to the prospective bride's parents, taking with them certain presents in the form of rice, liquor, betel-nuts, &c., and formally ask the daughter's hand for their son. If the presents are accepted by the girl's parents, it is assumed that the proposal is favourably received, and the respective parents at one proceed to settle the amount of the bride-price (*gádhan*),[1] which is always paid by the bridegroom's family to the parents of the bride. In Darrang the amount so paid rarely exceeds Rs. 40/- to Rs. 60/-, though in Kamrup and Goalpara it is said to be often double these sums; and even larger still among the Rábhás, Saraniyás, &c. In paying this formal visit to the prospective bride's parents, those of the bridegroom are always accompanied by some of the elders or leading men of their own village, these latter acting as witnesses of the marriage contract, and so constituting in their own persons a very effective, if irregular, system of marriage registration. The stipulated "bride-price" need not be paid at once, nor does the actual union take place for some months after the marriage-contract has been entered into. And in no case does the bride leave her parents' home until puberty has been attained; so that the manifold and obvious evils inseparable from the system of infant betrothals, and the prohibition of the marriage of child-widows among the higher castes of Hindus, happily find no place whatever in the more wholesome domestic life of the Kacháris.

(*c*) In cases where the bridegroom or his parents are unable to pay the bride-price demanded by the girl's parents, it is usual for the young man to give the equivalent in personal service in the house of the bride's parents, much as Jacob[2]

[1] Assamese, *gā-dhan*, body-price.—[Ed.]

[2] See Genesis, xxix. 20. Very eloquent in their simplicity and straightforwardness are the words in which the sacred writer describes this "tale of true love" in the days when the world was young. "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel and *they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.*" "The labour we delight in physics pain."

served in Laban's house seven years for Rachel. The period of service is a matter of arrangement between the parents of the parties concerned, and seems to vary greatly, *i.e.*, from three or four to upwards of twelve or fifteen years. Cohabitation, however, is allowed after about twelve or eighteen months' service, and at the conclusion of the full period, the young people are free to depart whithersoever they will, though they usually return to the house of the bridegroom's parents. This form of service is known commonly as "*Olaó ghar-jiyá.*"

(*d*) A modification of the above form of service is that which is known as "*mál ghar-jiya*" (Darrang) or "*Khasrot-tháka ghar-jiya*" (Kamrup). In this case the prospective bridegroom severs all connection with his own family, and identifies himself completely with that of his bride, in whose house he serves until the death of her parents, when with his wife he is entitled to the whole or the usual share of their property. On that of his own parents or relatives he retains no claim whatever.

The actual ceremony of marriage among the Kacháris can perhaps hardly be looked upon as of a religious character, but must be regarded as more of the nature of a social and festive gathering. The order of proceedings is somewhat as follows:— On a fixed day a party of the bridegroom's friends, numbering some four or five women and thirty or forty men, set out for the house of the bride's parents or guardians. The bridegroom may himself accompany the party but more frequently does not. The immediate object of the journey is to bring the bride to the bridegroom's house. The party take with them nine loads of viands, *i.e.*, two men carry a pig, other two a large jar containing rice-liquor, four men carry loads of *támal-pan*, whilst the last man carries a quantity of eatables meant for the men and cowherds, who, it is supposed, might otherwise attempt to prevent the marriage party from reaching the bride's house. Two women called *bairati* are in charge of these materials for the wedding feast.[1] On reaching the bride's house her people pour freely on the whole party an irritating liquid known as *kachu páni* (water mixed with the juice of the *kachu* plant) and to this somewhat rough welcome the bridegroom's party are bound

[1] This may be a survival of the old practice "marriage by capture."

to submit without complaining, although the liquid causes much irritation to, and even blisters, the skin. Finally the good things brought by the bridegroom's party are taken charge of by the bride's people, and the wedding feast is forthwith duly prepared. The village elders sit in front of the assembly, often a large one, and the younger people behind, each guest having in front of him either a brass plate or (more usually) a plantain leaf. On each of these plates the bride places a quantity of rice and curry, serving the elders first; and when all are duly provided for she makes obeisance to the assembled company, and sometimes kneels in their midst for their sanction and approval on entering upon the duties of married life, her husband when present kneeling with her. Then one of the village elders, acting as Deori, makes a short address on the obligations of the married state, ending by wishing every blessing, &c., to the newly wedded pair, the whole assembly joining in at the end with one voice "*erŏina záthang*," *i.e.*, "so may it be," (Amen). The rest of the day is spent in feasting and merry-making, but towards evening the bride is formally taken to the bridegroom's house. If on the journey she has to cross a river, road, or embankment (*áli*), &c., she is given at each such crossing nine areca nuts and nine pan-leaves as presents to overcome her assumed reluctance to proceed further. (Perhaps another relic of the "marriage by capture" practice.) Before the bride enters the bridegroom's house, those who bring her are entitled to receive a jar of molasses as well as one of rice-liquor, and are hospitably entertained for the night. It is said that Kachári custom sanctions a certain interval of time, sometimes amounting to five days, between the bride's entering her husband's house and the consummation of the marriage. All expenses attending the marriage festival, which may extend to Rs. 200/- and upwards, are borne by the family of the bridegroom, the bride's people as a rule contributing nothing.

4. *Death.*

Immediately after death occurs, the corpse is carefully washed by the nearest relatives, the arms and legs straightened out, the head anointed with oil, and the hair reverently combed. A fowl or a pigeon is killed, and from its flesh a curry is prepared

with vegetables and condiments. A portion of this food is then placed close by the deceased's head, and the act of feeding him with a little of it is carried out up to a certain point, though no food is as a matter of fact actually placed within his lips. This act is repeated some ten or twelve times, and what remains of the curry, &c., is then thrown away, no one being allowed to consume it. The dead man's body is then clothed with the best garments he owned in his lifetime, and the whole covered with a perfectly new cloth; and in this condition it is taken outside the homestead for final disposal.

Disposal of the dead.

There are two recognised way of disposing of the dead, *i.e.*, (1) Burial and (2) Cremation. The latter is looked upon as the more correct and respectable, though from motives of economy the former is by far the more common. When burial is decided upon the corpse is carried to its last resting place, which is often but not always on the banks of a running stream, by the nearest surviving relatives, no women being permitted to attend. Should it be necessary for the burial party to cross a river or irrigation canal, a cord is usually stretched from bank to bank at the crossing place, either above or below the water, to serve a kind of bridge for the spirit (*jiwa*), should he be at any time disposed to revisit the scenes amid which his earthly life has been passed.[1] Arrived at a suitable place (there are no recognised cemeteries for the interment), some pice are thrown on the spot, to purchase the ground from the deity (*madái*) to whom it is supposed to belong. The body is laid on the ground and the grave duly dug, but before placing the corpse therein, the friends and relatives make a solemn procession around it, five times in the case of a man and seven in that of a woman. The body is then placed in the grave, a somewhat shallow one, and the nearest relatives proceed to fill it with earth. In carrying out this process a certain precaution is taken, *i.e.*, a hollow reed or a stalk of jungle grass (*kher*) is placed perpendicularly in the grave extending from the nose of the deceased to a point somewhat above the natural level of the ground; and in filling the grave with earth, great care is taken not to injure or displace this reed, so that the deceased's spirit may be able to breathe should he so desire.

1. Burial.

[1] Another instance of the prevalence of a belief that spirits cannot cross running water without assistance. (Cf. *The Khasis*, pp. 135, 141.—Ed.)

After filling the grave four posts are erected over it, one at each corner; and threads passed around them, in order to prevent the spirits of other men from interfering with the repose of the deceased. In the case of well-to-do people a certain number of rupees are usually buried with the corpse, and even the poorer classes make offerings of pice, &c., for this pious purpose; whilst brass and other utensils needed in every-day life are almost always left on the grave, it being supposed that the deceased may require the use of these things in the new state of existence on which he has recently entered. Finally, a rough shed of thatch is put up close by the grave to shelter the deceased's spirit from rain and sun.

2. Cremation. Very much the same procedure is in vogue in the case of cremation, which is looked upon as the more respectable method of disposing of the dead among the wealthier members of the community. Cremation usually takes place on or near the banks of running streams, and is prefaced by the formal buying of the land from the deity (*madái*) of the locality. Here too a certain difference is made in disposing of the corpse of a man and of a woman respectively; for in the case of a woman *seven* layers of wood are placed under the body and seven above it, whilst in dealing with a man's corpse *five* such layers under and five above the body are held to be sufficient. After placing the body on the funeral pile, the deceased's friends and relatives pass round it in procession, *five* times in the case of a man and *seven* in that of a woman (see above). The funeral pile is then set on fire on all four sides at once, and the fire carefully fed until every vestige of the deceased's body is consumed. The ashes are not carried away, but four posts are usually placed in the ground enclosing the oblong space on which the cremation has been carried out; and on the tops of these a cloth is spread, which is held to shelter the spirit of the deceased from sun and rain.

Indications of belief in life after death. From what has been written above, it would certainly seem that the Kachári has some idea, however vague and unsatisfactory, of a life prolonged after the great change we commonly call "death," though his notion of the future life is merely that of the "first (earthly) life renewed." It has obviously little or nothing in common with the hope of life eternal in Christ, *i.e.*,

life *in* God, life *with* God, life *like* God, given us in the New Testament (see 1 Cor. xv.; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 John iii. 2).

Festivities. 1. Domestic.

From such information as the writer has been able to ascertain, there would seem to be few well-marked domestic festivities among the Kacháris, though the race is a very sociable and hospitable one, and the people entertain each other freely and frequently.

The two following may perhaps be mentioned:—

A. "*Mikham gadán zánái*," *i.e.*, the "eating of the new rice." This is a feast held about December 10th (there is apparently no fixed date), in celebration of the commencement of the cutting of the great rice crop of the year (*sáli dhán*). It is on this occasion that the proceeds of the newly harvested rice are first partaken of as an actual article of food. There is perhaps nothing of a religious character about it, its main feature being a very free consumption of rice-beer, often resulting in much drunkenness.

B. "*Mahu hanai*" (or *thàmfoi hasa-nai K*), *i.e.*, "the driving away of mosquitoes." This is a form of merry-making got up mainly by the young people of a village about the latter part of November or early in December, to celebrate the departure of the mosquito plague for the cold season. Some twenty-five years ago the writer was passing the night in a school-shed, and was aroused from sleep by much shouting, dancing, &c., just outside the door. On looking out into the moonlight he saw a group of fantastic figures, some of them clothed in dry plantain leaves, and wearing a head-dress made of thatch of preposterous proportions resembling an enormous conical-shaped "dunce cap." On inquiring the reason of the gathering, he was told that the performers were "driving away the mosquitoes." No doubt this is an amusement got up by the younger members of the community, who are sometimes rewarded for their efforts by small gifts of money, food, &c., from their elders (*cf.* "Guy Fawkes," at home).

2. Tribal.

There would seem to be no distinctively tribal festivals characteristic of the Kacháris of this district (Darrang), unless the January and April *Bihus* can be regarded as such. The origin of these two festivals is still somewhat obscure and

uncertain, and further light on the subject is greatly to be desired. Certainly they are not *exclusively* Kachári festivals, for they are observed by the Hindus in this neighbourhood as well as by the Kacháris.[1] Among the latter the January Bihu is usually celebrated about the 12th of that month. For weeks previously the young people have been busy building "Bihu huts" of jungle thatch; also in erecting tall bamboos, sometimes surmounted by ragged flags, &c., while straw, thatch and other combustibles are piled up around these bamboos to the height of many feet. On the appointed Bihu night these sheds, &c., are all set fire to amid much rejoicing, dancing, singing, &c., and of course there is, as on all like occasions, a liberal consumption of the national rice-beer. For a month or two previously to this festival, the village boys and young people have had to guard the growing and ripening rice crops night and day; and in all likelihood this merry-making, which is very much of the nature of a "Harvest home," is largely an expression of their joy and gladness at being relieved from this hard and irksome duty.

The April Bihu, the origin of which it is not so easy to account for, seem to be a "Saturnalia" of much more objectionable character. The people abandon themselves freely both to drunkenness and other forms of licentiousness, and cases of serious assault and riot have been known to accompany and follow these gatherings. Among the Darrang Kacháris, this festival lasts for seven days, during which little or no work is done, the whole period being given up to merry-making, dancing, feasting, &c. As is the practice among their Hindu neighbours, on the opening day all cattle are taken to the nearest river or tank, and there formally bathed, and afterwards sprinkled with a preparation compounded of rice-beer (*zu*), tomatoes, and turmeric. The horns are smeared with oil, and occasionally oil, ashes, and pounded rice-flour are applied in patches to the bodies of the cattle. This duty discharged, the people abandon themselves to sheer merriment, the younger folks especially giving themselves up to dancing and singing, &c.

[1] The interesting thing is that a Visu festival is also in use in Eastern Bengal. The matter is one which might be investigated, say, by the Vangiya Sāhitya Parisat.—[Ed.]

The verses sung at these festivals seem for the most part to be little better than mere meaningless jingle-jangle rhymes, made up on the spur of the moment, though occasionally some of them give an insight into the peculiar humour of the Kachári character and temperament. One or two samples of what is sung at these gatherings are given below :—

1. Agŏi, Boisági, faidá nang.
   Dána bathar jánai-khai rang zágan zang.

2. Adá Puá Rám, laga laga thángdang ;
   Gámsá hádang, fáli hádang, mána brábdang ?

3. Ádá Ráguna, fáriyá, ai fáriyá,
   Námoisă, gunoisă, fáriyá, ádá fáriyá ;

   Áma máseyakhosa zuriyá, ádá zuriyá ;
   Dáosá máseyá-khosa zuriyá ádá zuriyá,
   &c. &c. &c.

The above represents an exchange of playful banter between two members (brother and sister) of a Kachári family who are about to take part in a Bihu festival or some similar merry-making. The brother, Puá Rám, with all a young man's impatience and eagerness to enjoy the fun, calls to his sister, Boisagi, to come out from the house and join him at once, while she from within (couplet two) pleads womanlike for a few minutes longer grace to complete her personal adornment. Both brother and sister then join in calling on a near relative, a *mauzadár*, not to shirk his social responsibilities, but at once to provide the ways and means for a plentiful Bihu feast. The general sense of the three couplets, somewhat freely translated, is given below :—

1. Sister Boisagi, come out and play ;
   This is our Bihu holiday ;
   Don't move inside the house all day.

2. Dear brother mine, I'll come anon
   I'm putting my best *sari* on ;
   Five minutes' grace ; don't harshly press ;
   We ladies *must* have time to dress.

3. Uncle's a wealthy *mauzadár ;*
   Long has he served the great Sirkar ;
   He'll gladly give a bounteous feast,
   A round half-dozen pigs at least.
   &c. &c. &c.

II

The following couplet, which is not connected with the foregoing, calls perhaps for some explanation. The words, of which a free translation is appended, are supposed to be uttered by a Kachári damsel, the village belle, to a fickle lover, who, after paying court to her for a time, deserts her and marries another. The faithless swain is a man of some little importance in the village community as a *dāng dāliyā*, or drum-major, one of his functions being to beat the big drum (*madal*) at all festivals, marriage processions, &c. He has the misfortune to lose his wife after a month or two of wedded life, and then would fain return to the "old love."

Armed therefore with his big drum of office and apparelled in his gayest attire, he presents himself before the Kachári belle and renews his suit for her hand. Now the average Kachári maiden has a wholesome sense of her own value (in married life she is not unfrequently the "better man" of the two), and no more relishes being "jilted" than her sisters in other and more civilised parts of the world. She at once, therefore, repels his advances in the most positive and unqualified way; and not only so, but in the presence of a large bevy of scornful village maidens, all highly resentful of the faithless lover's fickleness, she proceeds to pour contempt on his suit in the following severely sarcastic couplet ("facit indignatio versus"):—

Dáng-dáliyá, dángdáliyá.
Mozáng mozáng gán-blá-ba
Náng-kho náng-li-yá ; nang-li-yá

Handsome raiment though you wear,
I'm not for you, I do declare.

(The original Kachári verse is singularly emphatic.)

Or "You come to me in bright array :
I'm not for you ; be off, I say.
This dandy swain my mate would be?
No 'second-hand lover,' girls, for me."

The above couplets may perhaps be fairly looked upon as typical illustrations of the Kachári temperament and character,

and it may be inferred from them that human nature among this interesting race does not greatly differ from human nature in other and more civilised countries of the world.

It may perhaps be added that whilst the Garos living in the plains observe both the January and the April Bihus their brethren in the Hills ignore both, though they would seem to have certain special harvest festivals of their own. The people of the North Cachar Hills, on the other hand, seem to observe only one annual Bihu, of the nature of a harvest home, at any time between October and December. These Kachári festivals are almost always attended by an immoderate consumption of the national rice-beer, not to say by actual drunkenness in not a few cases. On the other hand, they have their good side in that they help to keep the people to some extent beyond the influence of the destructive vortex of Hinduism, in which their simple primitive virtues might otherwise be so readily engulfed, and the adoption of which in whole or in part is invariably accompanied by a grave and deep-seated deterioration in conduct and character.

SECTION V

Folk-Lore, Traditions and Superstitions

On this section of the subject there is no need to dwell at any length; indeed, materials for the purpose are to a great extent wanting. Of traditions, properly so called, whether historical or otherwise, the Kacháris of this district would seem to be almost absolutely destitute. Nor can they be regarded as a superstitious race, for it is only when suffering from a serious outbreak of cholera, *Kálá-azár*, or other like public calamity, that they make frequent, and sometimes costly, offerings to their deities as shown in some detail in the preceding section. As a rule the people are of a bright, cheerful disposition; and as a planter friend once remarked to the writer, of all the various races employed on his extensive tea estates the Kacháris were the only people who might be frequently heard whistling merrily as they went to and from their daily toil. Moreover, the subject of Kachári folk-lore has already been effectively dealt with by a writer fully competent to do it ample justice; and perhaps the objects aimed at in this section will be best attained by re-issuing three or four of the more characteristic and typical of the interesting series of Kachári folk-tales collected by this writer, some fifteen years since, from an intelligent member of the Kachári race still (1906) resident in this district (Darrang).[1]

[1] See *A Collection of Kachari Folk-tales, &c.*, by J. D. Anderson, Esq., I.C.S. (retired). Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong, 1895.

I

In Section IV some reasons have been given for the view that the Kachári race has a special respect, if not reverence, for the element of *water*, especially perhaps for flowing water, rivers, &c. And the latter part of the following folk-tale furnishes some sort of explanation of this presumed respect and reverence.

Dùima dùisá ni khoráng.

Sánùi brai burui man. Pháre unau bisur gothai brai-burui zálangbá, buruiá zingá-sínánai brainu khithánaise "Brai, zangfurhá zi danai fisáfur dang, bísùr má zánánai thánggan?" Erui bungbá braiá mai hu khàmnu lági Khuberniáu thángnánai, mai sobai bisor áru lai-megong, láfá megong, bifùr máni-ni bígot-zului bínánai nå-i-au lábonánai sànsni sànzàt lámáibau hor thánánai, nå man-fai-nánai buruinu khithánaise: "Áng gásenu bigot-zului lábobai." Pháre nå-i-au sànne-su thánánai, khet khàmnu lági sorai fithá-gúndui lánánai há nainu lági tháng-naise. Pháre gahàm há datse nai-ui frábui fátbrui-thing-bu zurá khánánai dinnánai nå fainaise. Unau sànse-ni-kháli

How the rivers were made.

Once upon a time there lived a man and an old woman. And when they were quite old, the old woman said to her husband, "How shall these our children get food when we are gone?" So the old man travelled afar to the great god Kuvera,[1] the god of riches, and taking from him seedlings of paddy, pulse, mustard, and gourds, journeyed for eight days and so reached his home. And after staying a couple of days he set forth to cultivate, taking dry food with him. And first he marked out a piece of rich land by placing boundaries on all four sides of it, and so came home. And again he set out another day with hoe and axe, and cut and burned the jungle, and cleaned the soil, and after worshipping

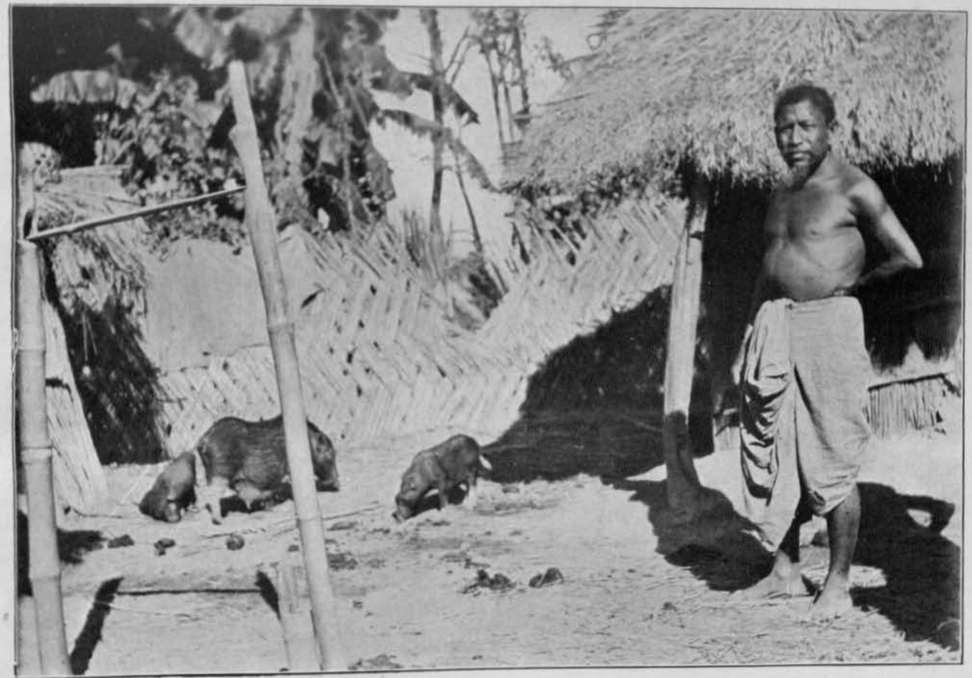
[1] The hideous Kuvera, god of wealth. He was a white man with three legs and eight teeth. Apparently, the same as the Hindu Pluto; and lord of the shades as well as of wealth.

khodál sekhá bifur máni lánánai thángnánai hágrá eonánai áru bi hágráfurkho saunánai hákho mazáng khámnaise. Binifrai, sànzá sànàp áru sà khlá fàtbruithing khulumnánai khoná bruithing phongse phongse záunaise.

on each side of his field—on the east and on the west, on the north and on the south—he struck one blow with his hoe on each side.

Biaunu há gásenu mannaise. Pháre baidi baidi mai áru fifáng megong thaigong boikhobu funánai hunaise. Pháre hábá zapbá braia nåi-au thángnánai zirai-nánai thánaise. Obásu ázibu dang khalibu dang sànse buruiá mai nainu lági braikho lugu homnaise. Khintu braiá bungnaise "Lamáiau dui guiá. Nangha dui gángbá áng maunifrai hunu?" Theobu bi brai-ni khorang khnásongálábá embrábrá braikho homnaikhai lángnáng-naise. Pháre thángui thángui maini há man-si man-si zábá, burui-há dui gángnánai brainu khithábaí, braiá bungnaise, "Áng nangnu duhui-nu khithádangman, nongga? Theobu ángni khoráng khná-i-álábá fainanai ángkho dukhu hùiù." Ereùi bungbá, buruiá bungnaise, "Dini áng dùi manlángábá thoi-si-gan. Nang áng-nu dui hunu-nánggo." Pháre unau braiá mungbu upai mane zánánai, dùi namai-nángnaise. Namaiè namaiè fukurimanse

And when all was ready, the old man planted his seedlings of various sorts, and finally went home and rested. And so, as time went by, the old woman desired vehemently to see how the crops were getting on. But the old man said, "There is no water on the road, and if you grow athirst you will get no relief." But she persisted and prevailed, and made her husband take her along. And as they went and were now quite close to her husband's field, behold, the old woman began to be very thirsty. And the old man, being enraged, cried "What did I tell you? There is no water and yet you would come." But she, being a woman, said "If you do not give me to drink I shall die. So water you must procure as best you can." So the old man, seeing no other way, went to seek for water. And after long search, seeing a tank, he bound the old woman's eyes with a cloth



Kachári Village Interior (Kamrup District).

From a Photograph by Mrs. H. A. Colquhoun.

nubá bi buruini megonkho hí zang khánánai be fukuri-há-lági lángnaise. Aru braiá bungnaise "Nang be fukuri kho naiálábá dùi láng." Khintu dùi lángbá-rù mábá mábá dùi ni dau áru hángsufrá birlai-bá, bikho khnánánai, bikho nainu lubuinánai nai-naise. Beaunu daufurni gelénai áru rong zlainai nunánai bihábu brai zang rong zlainu mon zánaise. Obásu braiá khàmá, buruiá ágárá. Phàre braiá buruini khoráng lánu gnáng zánaise. Obásu bisurhá áji-bu-thaiu kháli-bu-thaiu gâthâ gáthai zánaise. Zábá, bisurkho fisínu háekhai braiá bisurkho buruini khoráng-zang Hem-ni házo-au láng-nánai beaunu fukuri manse khamnánai baidi baidi ná khàmnánai dùiau hogàrnánai dinbunaise.

and dragged her to the water's edge and said to her, "Drink if you will, but look not upon the tank." Now the ducks and other water-fowl were playing in the water, and were making a merry noise, clacking and quacking. And, the old woman being curious, like all her sex, peeped at them. And, seeing them at their play, she too desired to be happy in her husband's society, and, though he was very loth, prevailed with him. And so in due course there were born to them many sons and daughters. And then, in order to provide for their food, he journeyed to the Himálayas and digged a great tank, stocked with many kinds of fishes.

Phàre unau Sri braiá suimá fudrun máse lánánai mùi sessá áru khusung námaibaie námai-baie dùi gángsu dangman. Ereaunu Sri braiá be fukuriau tháng - fnáng - naise. Beaunù dùi nunánai lángnu namaibá, náfrá bikho raidaunaise, "Áfá, nang beni dùi langbá, zangfurkho gahàm kham-nánggan." Beaunu bi sumai lánánai, dùikho lángbá, náfrá bungnaise, "Dá nang zang-furkhu Loitho hálági láng."

Now, one day the god Sri, the god of good luck, came that way with his white dog, a-hunting for deer and hares and tortoises. And when he came to the margin of the tank, behold he was very thirsty. But when he stooped to drink, the fishes said to him eagerly that he must grant them a boon in return for their water. To which he assented; and when he had satisfied his thirst, the fishes said, "Take us to the

Beaunu Sri braiá gaigainu lauthi zang dru-dru bu-bu-bá khithu khithu dùi bù-hùi bùnai, aru náfrá bu fainaise. Bibaidinu dùisá zánaise. Obásu unau náfra Sri brai-nu láo thaise áru khumrá thaise hotnaise. Pháre bikhonu lábonánai sáse khurmá-ni nå-i-au hápfaibá binu zo mikhàm áru omá máse buthátnánai hùnaise. Pháre okhá naibá Sri braiá be khumrá-kho bini khurmánu hunaise. Hubá bi khumrákho dànkhaubá tháká gazá mannánai áru báti-se khàm záhùnù lági omá buthát-naise. Áru omá bikhau[1] man-se dinnaise. Zákháng-ùi-frábui fainu námáibá omá bikhaukho Sri brainu hùnaise. Hùbá áru braiá laukhobu khurmánu hùnaise. Bi lau-au darbi gazà dangman. Khintu be kho-rángkho braiá mithiá. Áru bini khurmaiá-bu bi-nu khithá-i-a-khùise. Unau braiá nåi-au fainaise. Áru bihá nå-i-au bini fisázu-kho zábrá zánanai thánai nunaise. Bi láo aru khumrá-kho khurmá-kho hùláng-naikhai bibaidi zabrá zánai áru bini khurmaiá-bu be lao áru khumrá-kho lákhman-aikhai zabrá gabràp zánánai thánáise. Obásu bini unau náfrá ozá zá-thí-nánai bisur-ni nå-i-au thángnánai gadán nai-

great river, the Brahmaputra (or Lohit)." So the god Sri tied them to his staff, and drew them after him, making runnels of water. And that is how the rivers were made. And the fishes in return gave him a pumpkin and a gourd. And, taking these with him to a friend's house, his friend regaled him with rice-beer and pig's flesh; and in the morning he gave his friend the pumpkin. But when his friend cut open the pumpkin, it contained nothing but pure silver. So he bade the god Sri stay another day, and brewed fresh beer and killed another pig, and when he was going away gave him a flitch of bacon to take with him. So the god Sri gave him also the gourd. But when he cut open the gourd, it contained nothing but pure gold. And so the god Sri journeyed to his home. And when he got there, he found that his little daughter was very ill. And that was because he had given away the presents which the fishes had made him. But the fishes took pity on him, and came to him in the guise of physicians, and told him that if he would worship and do sacrifice on the banks of rivers, then his

[1] = a "side" of pork.

hùi-nánai[1] khithánaise "Nangsur zusá mairong áru goe zoráse áru dau màse lánánai duisá-i-au hùnánai khulumbá, nangsur-há zabrá zágan. Besur bibaidi-nu khámnánai zabrá zanaise. Binikhai dá Bârâfrá duisá duimá-furkho khulumu. Zapbai.

daughter would be healed; which he did. And that is why we Kacháris worship rivers. And that is all.

II

The moral of the following story is a thoroughly sound one. It is obviously a kind of sermon on such familiar texts as "Procrastination is the thief of time," "Never put off to to-morrow what you should do to-day," &c. Its teaching is clearly the same as that which finds expression in the well-known words:

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune:
> Omitted, all the voyage of their lives
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

Sásè olsia gâthâ ni khoráng.

Sásè olsiá gâthâ dangman, Bi málai háli oinánai mai gai zap-bá, obásu bi mámár dubliau háli oi-hùi-dang. Pháre Buthur[2] braiá olsiá gâthâ-kho háli oinai nunánai bi thángnu haekhai, bungnaise, "Helùi gâthâ, nanglai dá má háli oidang-ùi, buthurá mobábá-nu thángbai. Dá mai gaibá má zá-bau-nu?" Theobu bi bikho nai-finá, mosokno buá dhum dhum dhàm dhàm

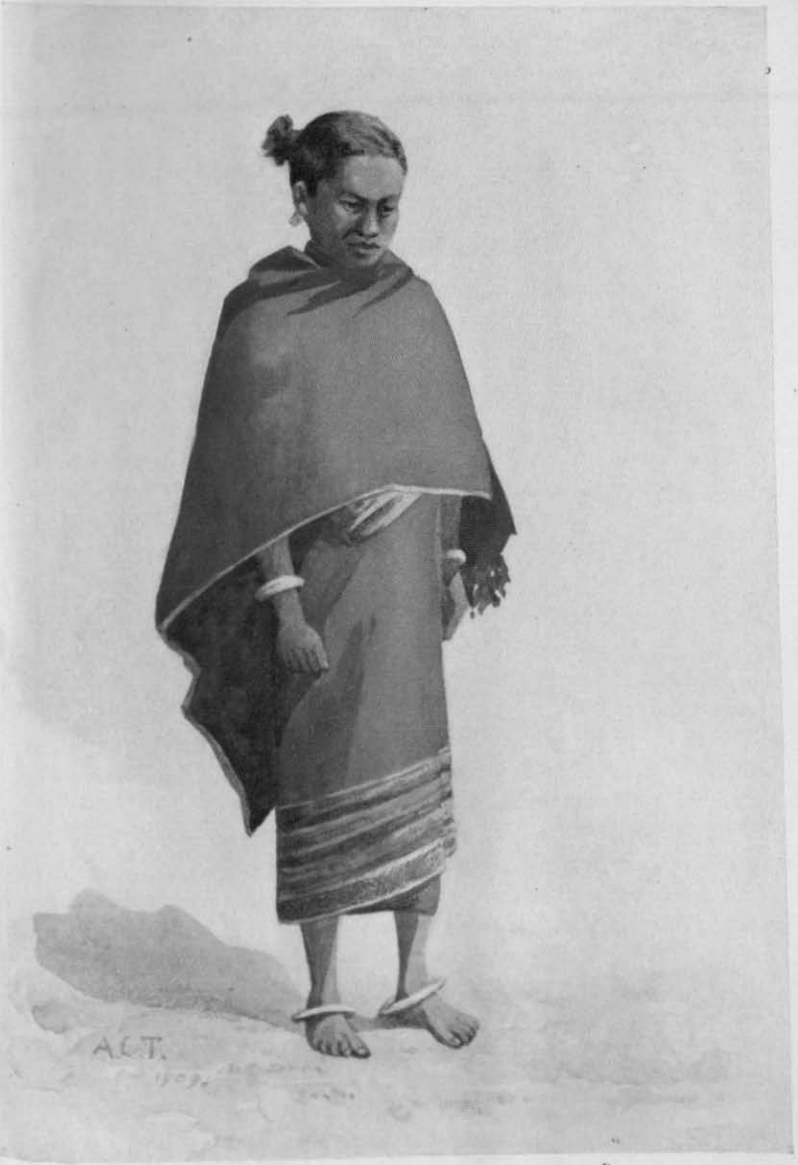
The Story of the Lazy Boy.

There was once a very lazy boy. And when everybody else had planted out his paddy, he was only setting forth to plough. But the old man of the season, seeing him, said "The season has gone; what are you ploughing for now? The paddy is all planted out, and it is late." But the boy would not listen to him, and ploughed sturdily ahead, beating his cattle soundly as he

[1] *Gadán nai-hùi-nai* means "observing omens."
[2] *I.e.*, the season personified.

bunánai, natzret nat-flet háli oibai tháiù. Unau braiá khonle khonle sungnaikhai gåthåá bràp-nánai nai-gedau-nánai bung-naise, "Nanglai máuni brai lùi? Áng kho háli oinaiau be baidi sungbai tháiu? Ángha má zádang, áng su mithidang." Beaunu braiá bungnaise "Nonggá, lǜi áfá, áng nangkho gahàm khoráng-sù khithánu námaidang." Beanu gåthåá bungnaise "Má khoráng dang? Mámár kithá. Ángha háli oinu sàn zolángbai." Obásu braiá bungnaise "Dá háli oinánai má zánu? Buthur thángbai," hanbá, gåthåá bung-naise "Bi bobething tháng-khu? Mau thangkhu, nang ángnu kithánánai hu. Áng mai gainu manábá, ma zánánai tháng-gan?" Obásu braiá bungnaise "Nang aglánù málai zang luguse háli oinánai mai gaibá hàmgauman, dálai buthurkho sùr nunù hágo, áru mábrui bikho laifin-nu?" Beaunu gåthåá bungnaise "Nang khithínánai hunu hábá, áng bikho zeruibábu lábonu hágan." Hanbá bikho braiá bulu haekhai khithánaise "Nang bething thángui thábá khårå phut-thru-thru brai sáse thokon thunánai dubli gezer gezer thángnai nugan. Obániá nang bikhonu hom. Áru bi zere kníthá-i-u, nang

went. And when the old man again and again questioned him, he cried "What sort of old man is this? Can he not see that I am busy? I know very well what I am about." But the old man said gently, "Nay, my son: but it is for your good that I would speak to you." And the boy said "Speak quickly then, and have done with it." And the old man said, "My son, the season is gone; what avails it to plough now?" And then the boy cried "Where has it gone? And when has it gone? And why has it gone? And how shall I find it?" But the old man of the season said, "You should have ploughed when others did. The season has gone, and no man can bring it back." But the boy said, "I must bring it back; else, how shall I eat, and how shall I live? Do tell me where it is gone." And as he would not let the god go, finally, losing patience, he said "You go over there, and you will find an old man with a snow-white head ploughing in a field. You get hold of him and do as he tells you." So saying, he made his escape. Then the lad hastened home to his mother and bade her cook supper quickly, and tie



KACHARI WOMAN

bebaidinu khàmdui" hannánai, buthur braiá thángnaisei. Obásu gåthåá háli hogàrnánai nåiau fainánai bima buruikho mámár khàm songnu hùnánai, zaùi lángùi bimánù kithánaise "Ai, nang gábun fungzáni khàm songnánai hù, áru mairong khothåse bunnánai hù. Ang buthur braikho husu-láng-nù nánggo. Maná-thu dini áng háli oinaiau brai sáse fainánai mai gainaini Buthurá tháng-bai hannánai kithánái, áru bikho hùsù-lángbá mangan, áru bi zere khámnu thinu, bebaidi-nu khàm, hannánai kithalángnai." Obásu buriá okhá naibá khàm songnánai gåthåkho zá-hù-ùi làng-hù-ui mairong khotáse bunnanai hunánai gåthå-kho hogárnaise. Gåthåá thángui thángui zaikhonu lugù manù, bikhonù sungù, bisur bungù: "Buthur thángbai hannanai mithigo. Bi mábrùi áru bobething thángkhu, bikho zangfur khithánu haiá." Beaunu gåthåá gadau-srau zánánai bobething thán-gan hannánai zerenu manu erenu dubli gezer gezer thábai-baibá gazànau brai sáse nu-hotnaise. Nuhotbábinu buthur zánù nánggo nungnánai, bikho bungnaise "Áfá råthå; dase råthå. Áng nang-ni-au manse khoráng sungnu námaidang."

him up some rice to take with him on the morrow, for he was going to bring back the departed season for ploughing.

"For," said he, "when I was ploughing to-day, an old man told me that the season was gone, and that if I went after him and pursued him I would find him, and that I must do as he would tell me." So she rose very early in the morning, and, giving him to eat and drink, sent him on his way. And as he went, he asked all he met "Can you tell me where the old man of the season has gone?" But they said, "Everyone knows that the season is gone, but where it is gone, or why it is gone, who can say?" At last, when he was nearly in despair, he saw an old man ploughing afar off, and shouted to him "Stay a moment, father, stay; I want to ask you a question." But the old man was busy, and went his way. Then the lad pursued him and never ceased calling after him till at last the old man losing patience, turned upon him, and said, "What pertinacious noisy lad is this, who won't leave me alone?" But the lad said, "Be not angry, my father; I am fallen into great trouble, and it behoves you to

Theobu braiá khnásongläbá thángui tháiù. Gâthâá-bu khithu khithu thángui thángui khithálángu. Gabauzang braiá nai fafinnanai bungnaise "Má hekhong hekhong sùr gâthâlùi mauni lùi nanglai?" hannánai sungbá gâthâá bungnaise "Áfá brai, dá braplùi. áng manse dukhuau gaglainánai, nangni kháthiau faidang," hanbá braiá "Mámár khithá; mámár khithá; áng thángnu nánggo, ánghá nâá gazàn, hor-tho-hùi-gan;" hannaise. Obásu gâthâá khithánaise, "Áfá, áng nangkho buthur brai baidi nuïù. Binikhai nang ángkho dá buthàt. Málaiá boibu mai gaithrâ-bai; áng un zánánai dase-bù gainu há-ekhuise. Binikhai nang dase tháng-fáfin-bá ángha mai zágan" bungnaikhai, braiá binu khithá-naise, "Áng dá faibai, tháng fá-finnu háliá, nang benifrai mámár thángnánai, zese háiu gathánggabrám háli oinánai mai gaihùitháng." Obásu gâthâá fainánai zerenu manu erenu khothia[1]-khini-kho gaibropnánai dinnaise. Zapbai.

help me." "Speak quickly, then," said the old man. And the boy said, "I take you to be the old man of the season, and I pray you not to slay me. All the others have planted out their paddy, and I have fallen behind, and have planted nothing. Therefore, unless you turn back, I cannot hope to get any harvest." But the old man said, "It is too late for me to return. Go you back, and plant your paddy as best you can." And so the lad hastened back and planted out his seedlings in such heedless haste as became him. And that's all.

III

By his Hindu neighbours the Kachári is often looked upon as a Bœotian, a simpleton from whom little in the way of

[1] Assamese.

intelligent action is to be expected. And undoubtedly in the matter of mere book-learning he is never likely to take a very high place, nor will he shine brightly in the examination-room as an ordinary competitor. On the other hand, he is often endowed with certain practical qualities which are of great value to him in the battle of life. He usually has no small share of what is well called "the *saving* sense of *humour*," which prevents him from taking himself too seriously, and does not a little to lighten for him the cares and toils of life. Of his possession of this invaluable endowment many illustrations will be found in the collection of Kachári Folk-tales, &c., referred to above, a volume which the curious in such matters will do well to consult. And in addition to his sense of humour, he has often a goodly supply of sound homely *mother wit*, which stands him in good stead when brought into relations with other men, who from a merely intellectual point of view are undoubtedly his superiors. These, and other like endowments of great price, often enable him to seize with unerring instinct on the weak points of an opponent's position and to avail himself of them with no little dexterity and success. In the following amusing story, for instance, the simple (?) Kachári servant completely outwits his astute Bráhmin master, turning the tables on the latter to his no small dismay and discomfiture.

Bámun áru bini sákor ni Khoráng.	*The Bráhmin and his Servant.*
Sáse Bámun dangman, áru bihá sákor sáse dangman. Sànse sáne zang Bámun ni bihau-bikhunzu-ni nâiau thangnù-lági thálit gur gákhir sorai lánánai sákhor-kho bán hùnánai, bikho khithánaise "Nang be thálit-furkho dá zá. Zábá ánghá khithu fàtse bù megon dang." Eru hannánai thángui thánaise. Pháre unau boi sákhorhá mikhàm ukhuibá,	There was once a Bráhmin who had a servant. And one day when they were going to the house of the Bráhmin's mother-in-law, the Bráhmin gave his servant a bunch of plantains and other things to carry, and said to him, "Now, mind you don't eat those plantains, for I can see just as well behind as I can in front." And, so saying, he marched

thálit-kho lánánai, thaise thaise binu un-phat-si khithinánai bebaidinu boibò-kho-bù zà-thro-lángnaise. Pháre unau bisur dàpseau zirai-hùibá, Bámun bibànkho nueákhai, sákhor-ni sigáng-au sungnaise "Bibáná má zákhu?" Oba sákhorá bungnaise, "áng dukhui-nù nángnu khithinánai bi thálit-furkho zábai. Áru dá nang mánu sung-dang?" Bebaidinu Bámuná bolo[1] háekhai sri sri thánaise. Pháre besur beaunu khàm song-zá-nu-lági zothon khàmnaise, áru beaunu ná khawai má-ne-sù mandangman. Bini sákhornu máse buá hunánai, gásenu Bámuná lánaise. Pháre zeblá khàm man-naise, sàne-bù zánu lági zodangman. Ereaunu sákhorá sungnaise "Bámun gohain, ná khawaaiá máse buá daugaiù, ná dulù dulù daugaiù?" Beaunu Bámuna bungnaise "Dulu dulu daugiaù." Obà bi bini ná másekho bini khámau khubui-hot-detnaise, "Manáthu be hàtsing dauganu háià, nang-ni zang dulùse záthang." Beaubu gaigai-ni khoráng-zang-nu zennánai bikho mungbá bung-nu haiá-khùise. Unau khàmkho sákhorá hàtsing manzánaise.

Pháre binifrai thángui thánguisimli bifáng dulùse nunánai,

ahead. And presently the servant, getting hungry plucked one of the plantains from the bunch, and, holding it out to his master's back, ate it. And this he did again and again till all the plantains were gone. And when the Bráhmin presently asked what had become of the load, the servant said, "You told me you could see behind as well as in front. So I showed you each plantain before I ate it. And you never said anything."

So the Bráhmin went his way speechless. Presently they stopped to cook their midday meal, and they had got with them a few *khawai* fish. But the Bráhmin gave only one to his servant, and kept the rest himself. And when he was about to eat, the servant asked innocently "Oh! Bráhmin, do *khawai* fish swim about singly or in shoals?" To which the Bráhmin said, "Why, in shoals, of course." So the servant said, "Then my fish had better go with yours." And, so saying, he threw his fish on the Bráhmin's mess, which was defiled. So the Bráhmin got no dinner, and the servant ate the whole.

A little later they came across a number of simul trees.

[1] Assamese.

Bámun-kho sungnaise "Bámun gohain, be nunai bongfáng-frá má bongfáng?" Bámuná khithánaise "sirmolu." Sákhorá bungnaise: "Sirmolu nunggá. Bikho hirmolu hanu." Pháre obásu phong-bá phong-bá sonu lági khoráng khálainaise. Pháre gurkhiá dulùse lugù mannánai, bisurkho sungbá, "himulù" hannánai bisur bungnaise. Obánu sungá-hoálábá Bámunkho phongbá sonaise.

Áru bebaidi thángui thángui burmá dulùse nunánai sákhorá Bámunkho sungnaise "Bámun gohain, boi gángsu zábai thánai zanthu-fur má bungo?" Bámuná khithánaise "Bifur ság." Sákhorá bungnaise "Nunggá, bifur ságoli." Beaubu bibaidinu Bámuná phongbá so-zá-naise. Áru binifrai thángnánai dáu-ba dulùse nunánai sungnaise. "Bámun gohain, befur má dáu?" Bámuná bungnaise "Nang bifurkho mithiá? Bifurkho bog hanu." Bi bungnaise "Má bog hanu? Nunggá. Bikho boguli hanu." Beaubu bebaidinu Bámuná phongbá sozá naise. Unau bi manse slok hannaise:

"Ság sirmolu bog ba-káran
Tini pánch panra kil sudá akáran."

Seeing them, the servant asked his master, "And what do they call these trees, master?" And the Bráhmin (being an educated man) said, "These are sirmolu." But the servant said, "Not so, not so. These are himulu," and offered to bet five blows that it was so. And, meeting some cowherd boys, he asked them what the trees were. And when they said "himulu," he gave the Bráhmin five blows without further question.

Next they met a drove of goats. "And what may these be, Bráhmin, these animals that are grazing?" And the Bráhmin said, "These be called chág." But the servant cried, "Not so, not so. These are chágali." And the result, as before, was that the Bráhmin was worsted and got five blows. And next they came across a flock of paddy-birds, which the Bráhmin called "Bog," but the servant "Boguli." And again he was worsted and got his five blows. On which he consoled himself by reciting an Assamese saying, to the effect that it is ill arguing with a fool:

Phá binifrai thángnánai bihaibikhunzu ni nå kháthi manbá, sákhorkho thin-hot-gru-nánai khithanaise "Nang thángnánai mámár khàm songnu thin; manáthu ángha mikhàm ukhui-su-dang." Pháre bibaidi-nù bi tháng-nánai, Bámun-ni bikhunzunu hángsu buthàtnánai sobai kháre zang mikhàm songnánai dinnu khithánaise, áru bung-naise, "Nangni nángzá-madùiá megongau gabàp nunggábá zaiá." Obásu bi songnánai dinnaise. Pháre unau bizá-mádùiá so-fai-bánù, mamárui khàm khutnánai hunaise. Bizá-mádùiá ukhui-su-naï-khai, khàm megong mungbo básiá-lábá zánu gnáng zánaise.

Abásu unau bebaidinu baidi baidi lázi mannai zánaikhai, Bámuná bidánulágisitti gangse lit-nánai sákhorni ákhai-au hunánai nå-i-au hotnaise. Lámá sáse thángbá, beaunu litnu-gráng sáse mànsui lugù man-nànai, binu sitti khithi-naise. "Beau má litdang, áng-nu khithá." Obásu, mànsuiá sitti-kho nainánai, "Nangkho dànnu láge Bámun ni bidá-kho thindang" erui bungbá, bi sitti-kho phisinánai bungnaise "Áfá nang ángnu gubun sitti gángse litnánai hù." Áru be sittiau erehai lit, "ádá, nangni fisáhingrzauzang be sakhorá

And when they were now come near the Brahmin's mother-in-law's house, and the Bráhmin was become very hungry, he sent his servant on ahead to beg them to get supper ready. So the servant went on ahead and bade the Bráhmin's mother-in-law cook a duck and put in lots of plantain ashes, which the Kacháris use for salt, well knowing that his master disliked its acrid taste. So the duck was cooked with plenty of alkali.

And when the Bráhmin arrived, his meal was set before him, and he was so hungry that he had to eat it whether he liked its savour or no.

And so in various ways the Bráhmin was put to shame by his servant. So he wrote a long letter to his brother, and putting it in his servant's hand, bade him deliver it. But he went a little way, until he met a man who could read and write, and he bade him tell him what was written in the letter. And the man read him the letter, which was to the effect that the brother was to kill the servant. On this, the servant tore up the letter and bade his friend write another one, saying: "Dear brother, on receipt of this letter



KACHÁRI GIRL (Kamrup District).
From a Photograph by Mrs. H. A. Colquhoun.

man-hui-bá-nù hábá khàmnánai hù. Áng benifrai thángnánai bisur-ni hábá nunu nánggá" Bebaidinu be sittikho langnánai Bámun-ni bidánu hùnaise. Khintu bi sittikho nunánai, monau dukhu man-su-naise. Theobu, bigùi-ni khoráng gárnu háekhai, fisázù zang mámár hábá khàmnánai hunángnaise.

Pháre sànse thánánai bi fainanai bidá - kho sungbá gásenu khoráng khnánai, bi sákhor kho dánnùlági sri sri upai khàmnaise. Be upaikho sákhorni hingzauá mithinánai, bekho onnánai binu khithánaise. Khithábá, hingzau zang horau uduniau mosofisá máse khá-khrop-nánai futhunánai dinnaise. Pháre Bámuná fisázu zang udubai thádang mon khàmnánai, sri sri thangnánai mosofisákho dànnaise. Sàn-soba mosáfisákho dánfnáng-nai nunánai mámárùi bizámádui sákhor-kho gárhùinù lági thinnaise. Khintu bizámáduiá bisurni bariau lángnanai, lànzai dihonnánai, fopnánai dinnaise. Unau Bámuná mosá buthàtnai-ni nungge sri sri uddhar zánu lági gámini mànsuifurkho lingnánai phozu hudangman. Pháre mánsuifur zánu zobá, sákhorá báriau thángnanai moso lànzai-kho bunanai bungnaise "Bámuná

marry my servant to my niece without delay. I shall not be able to come to the wedding."

Taking this letter, the servant went to his master's brother, who was much vexed, but dared not disobey. Accordingly, though reluctantly, he married the servant to his daughter.

And, when the master came to see if his servant had been disposed of, and heard what had happened, he set about to kill him. But his niece got to know of the matter and told her husband, who got a calf, and, binding it hand and foot, put it by her in her bed. And in the night the Bráhmin came, and thinking the calf was his niece's husband sleeping by her side, killed it. And when he found out his mistake in the morning, and learned that he was guilty of cow-killing, he bade his niece's husband go and bury the calf in all haste. And the servant dragged the calf into the garden and buried it with its tail sticking out of the ground. Meanwhile, the Bráhmin set to work to get himself purged of the offence of cow-killing, and summoned the villagers to a feast without telling them why. And when they were all seated, the servant

mosobù buthárá-khùi phozù-bù huá khùi, hùi-sù." Bebaidi bungbai-thábá, phozuni mànsuifrá khnánánai, phozu zaiákhùise. Bebaidinù bisùr ud dhár manákhuise. Zapbai.

ran out into the garden and hauling at the calf's tail, called out, "The Bráhmin didn't kill a cow, Oh, no. And that isn't why he gives a feast, Oh, no." So the feast broke up, and the Bráhmin was not absolved. And that's all.

IV

Kachári Theory of Thunder and Lightning[1]

Aglaiau sáse rázá dangman, áru bihá hoásá sáse, hingzhausá sáse, dangman. Hoasáni nau Ráoná, hingzhausáni náu Ráoni, dangman. Láse láse bisur gaded záabá Ráonaiá gagai binánaukhonu hábá khàmnu namainai. Sànse Ráonaiá runùiau tháhoinai. Amphára bini bifaiá ikham zánu namaibá manákhuise, mánathu bi runuiau thánákho bifaiá mithiákhauman. Amphá bini sáse bandiá runuiau nunánoi rázáni sigángau khithánaisui; abánu razaiá thangnánoi sanghoinaisui, balui "Áfá, nangnu má náng-go? Háthi nánggobá, háthi hùgan; gorai nánggobá, gorai hùgan; theobo nang manau dukhu dá khàm," hannanoi khithánaisui. Aba Ráonaiá hannaisui, "Ángnu mungbo nánga; nang sumai lábasu áng khithágan." Ámphá bifaiá

There was once a king who had one son and one daughter. The son's name was Ráoná and the daughter's Ráoni. As they gradually grew up together, Ráoná wished to marry his sister. One day Ráoná remained alone in an outhouse unknown to his father; and when the latter wished his son to come to dinner, the young man could not be found. However, a servant saw the youth in the outhouse and told the king, who going to the boy asked him what was the matter. "If," said the king, "you want an elephant, I will give you an elephant; if you want a horse, I will give you a horse; but do not abandon yourself to sorrow in this way." And then Ráoná replied, "I am in no special want of anything, but if you give me a promise on oath, I will tell you what is

[1] From the writer's *Outline Grammar of the Kachári (Bárá) Language*, pages 80–82. Shillong, 1884.

mungbo uphai manikhai sumai lánánoi khithánaisui, "Nangnu zikhonu naṅggo, bikhonu hùgan." Hanbá Raonaiá bungnaisùi, "Ángnu Ráonikho hábá khàmnánoi hù; abásu áng mikhàm dùi lánggan." Abá bifaiá bibaidi khoráng khnánánoi manau zabrá-sin dukhu mannaisui. Amphàre bifaiá guninánoi sumai lánaikhai hába khlàmnánoi hùnù zathan khlàmnaisui; khintu be khorángákha Ráonini sigángau khithánu bádá hùnai; binikhai raubo khithai-a-khuise. Amphá Raoniá mairang sunù thángbá dùigáthánau sáse buruiá Ráoniniau sangnaisùi, balùi, "Nangsurhá má záadang?" Abá Ráoniá khithánaisui, "Zangfrá ádáhá hábá záagan." Áru buruiá hannaisui, "Maunithu hingzhausá zang hábá záanu?" Ráoniá bungnaisùi, "Áng khithánu haiá." Abánu buruiá hannaisùi, balùi, "Ai, nang zangsù hábá záanunù." Áru Ráoniá hannaisùi, "Ai, be khoráng thik ná?" hannánoi sangbá, buruiá sumai lánaisùi. Abá Ráoniá akhrángsau birláng-naisùi, áru Ráunikho birlangnai nunánoi Ráonaiábo guzarinánoi hasu-lángnaisui. Bikhonu mànsuifrá ákhá khrumniákhonu "Ráoná guzaridang" hannánoi bungù; áru Ráoni khàtlángnánai thap

the matter." Thereupon, the king, seeing that there was no help for it, took an oath saying, "Whatever you want, I will give it to you." And then Ráoná said, "Give me permission to marry Ráoni, and then I will eat my food." On hearing this the king was sorely troubled in his mind; but remembering the terms of his oath, he took steps to bring about the marriage, at the same time forbidding anyone to mention the matter to Ráoni, who, therefore, heard nothing about the proposed marriage with herself. But one day Ráoni went to the village stream to clean the rice for the daily meals, when an old woman met her and inquired, "What is going on in the palace to-day?" And Ráoni replied, "The son of the house is to be married to-day." And when the old lady asked further "But to whom is he to be married?" Ráoni replied, "Mother, I cannot say." And then said the old dame, "Ráoni, it is you that he is going to marry." And when Ráoni inquired, "Mother, can this be true?" the old woman took an oath to confirm what she had said. And then Ráoni at once flew right away up into the sky, and when Ráoná saw Ráoni thus flying

naifinbá bini makhángá at baidi nuiù, bikhonu akhá mablíbnai hanù ; Bârâfrá eroi bhábiù.

away, he shouted after her, doing his utmost to catch her. It is these loud shouts and threats of Ráoná that men call "thunder"; and when Ráoni occasionally looks back to see if her pursuer is gaining upon her, she in so doing reveals for an instant the brightness and beauty of her face, glowing like fire; and it is this bright, dazzling beauty of her countenance that men call "lightning."

Hence during a thunder storm may sometimes be heard the words "Ráonikho Ráonaiá hasùdang," *i.e.* "Ráoná is chasing Ráoni."

It is not impossible that the foregoing story may be a Kachári version, greatly altered, of a well-known episode told at length in the Rámáyana, *i.e.* the abduction of Sitá by Rávana the demon-king of Ceylon. The name Rávana in a slightly altered form (Ráoná) is not unknown among the Kacháris of this district (Darrang). About four or five miles south-west of the Událguri Tháná there are still existing the remains of a very fine earthwork road, known to this day as "Rowana's embankment" (Rávanagarh), which gives its name to the Mauzá in which it is situated. The construction of this earthwork must have involved a large outlay of labour, but the tradition about it is that it was thrown up in a single night by Rávana and his followers, the Rákhshases, Asurs, &c.

N.B.—Among the Kacháris of the North Kachár Hills, the mode of accounting for thunder and lightning is very different from that given above, though towards the end of the account given by the late Mr. Soppitt[1] certain statements are made which would serve to show that the two theories have something in common.

[1] See Soppitt's *Historical and Descriptive Account of Kachári Tribes in the North Kachar Hills*, pages 52 (foot) to 55.

SECTION VI.

OUTLINE GRAMMAR, ETC.

THE mother tongue of the Bårå race at least as spoken in this (Darrang) district undoubtedly belongs to the "Agglutinative" as distinct from the Inflexional family of languages. Here and there, perhaps, certain slight traces of inflexion may be found, but even these are doubtful and in any case very rare, indeed where they exist at all it may perhaps be assumed that they have been adopted with some obvious modifications from the speech of their Assamese and Bengali neighbours.

In the following pages only a very slight outline sketch of Kachári Grammar is attempted, as the writer has already dealt with the subject at some length over twenty years ago,[1] and most of the conclusions then arrived at still hold good, so far as the Kacháris of Darrang are concerned. But it is hoped that what little is given here may be of service to those who may have occasion to learn and make use of this language in after years. No attempt is made to draw any clear or well defined line between Accidence and Syntax, for these two closely allied branches of the subject may be best studied together by the use of certain illustrative sentences which to the attentive reader will give an insight into the structure of the language, whilst at the same time doing something to supply him with a useful vocabulary of words and phrases.

[1] He may perhaps venture to refer the curious in these matters to his *Outline Grammar of the Kachári (Bårå) Language*. Shillong, 1884. An admirable summary of the leading features of this form of Non-Aryan speech is given in the *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol, III, Part II, by Dr. Grierson, Calcutta, 1903, pages 1–17 and ff.

I. *Nouns.*

1. Gender.

A. Nouns denoting inanimate objects have no formal distinction of gender as *Oá*, a bamboo, *mai* rice (paddy).

B. In the case of animate objects, the gender of the noun is indicated by a separate qualifying word, placed usually after the noun, *e.g.*

(*a*) Hóa, man (male); Hingzhau, woman (female) used only of human beings.

(*b*) "Zălá," zŏ' used of birds, *e.g.* Dau zalá, a cock; dau zŏ, a hen.

2. Number.

Plurality (there is no dual) is indicated by adding fŭr, frá, or far, to the singular as

masá, a tiger.
masá-fŭr (-frá or -far), tigers.

3. Case.

The case endings, which hold good of nouns, pronouns, and adjective are given below :—

	Singular.			Plural.
Nom.	masá	a	Tiger.	masá-far, tigers, &c.
Obj.	khó	a		(case-endings identical with those in singular number).
Instru.	zang	by a ...		
Dat.	nŏ	to a ...		
Abl.	ni-frai	from a..		
Poss	ni	of a ...		
,,	há	,,		
Loc.	au (iau)	in a ...		
Voc.	Heloi mosá...	O		

(*a*) The possessive case has two signs, the former (ni) being by far the more commonly used.

(*b*) The ablative case ending is a compound one, as its proper sign (frai) is preceded by that of the genitive, ni. The same remark holds good sometimes with the locative case.

II. *Adjectives.*

1. Many adjectives begin with the letter *g*, to which a very short vowel is attached, so short indeed that in rapid speaking

the vowel of the first syllable may not be heard at all, whilst in composition this first syllable is sometimes omitted altogether, as

"mánsoia gahàm ná?" Hám-go.
man good (is he?). Good (he) is.

2. In composition the adjective usually, though not invariably, follows the noun it qualifies, as

Dŏima ga-súm.
(The) water black = (kálá páni).

3. Comparison.

This is effected by appending the syllable "sari" or "khri" (= than) to the word with which comparison is made, this word being always in the dative case. The superlative degree is denoted much in the same way, the noun being preceded by some word signifying "all," thus

(*a*) Bi áng-nŏ-khri gă-zau—he (is) taller than I (comparative).

(*b*) Bi bŏi-nă-sári ga-zaú-sin—he is the tallest of all (superlative).

In making these comparisons the first syllable (ga) of the adjective is often omitted: as

nang áng-nŏ-khri zaú (ga-zau) *i.e.* zau = (ga) zau, tall.
you I than tall (are).

4. Numeral Adjectives.

The numerical system in this District is very defective, only seven digits, *i.e.* sè, nè, thàm, brè (brŏi), bâ, râ (dâ), sni (sĭni), being generally used, though the remaining three, skhó, zàt, zi (zu), are occasionally recognised. There is also a useful collective word za-khai = four, which when followed by two numerals is to be multiplied by the former whilst the latter is to be added to the product so obtained; thus

zakhai-thàm sà thàm,
Four × three + three = fifteen (men).
Burmá zakhai-brè má-nè,
Goats four × four + two = 18 goats.

Before the second numeral are always inserted certain monosyllables, which classify the noun referred to, *e.g.* as above, sá (human beings) and má (irrational animals). This classifying syllable always indicates the point at which the multiplication ends and the addition begins.

III. *Pronouns.*

(*a*) The personal pronouns which undergo no change of form to indicate gender are :—

1. Áng	...... I.	Záng-fur	.... we.
2. Nang	...... thou.	Nang-sur	.... you.
3. Bi	...... he, she, it.	Bi-sur (fŭr)	...... they.

The possessive pronoun is expressed simply by putting the personal pronoun in the possessive case, as—

Bé áng ni nŏ, this (is) my house. This me of house (is).

To nouns expressing close family relationship, pronominal prefixes of possession are commonly added, *e.g.*—

	Father.	Mother.
My	Áng-ni á-fá.	Áng-ni á-i.
Your ...	Nang-ni nam-fá.	Nang-ni nam-má.
His	Bī-ni bī-fá. [1]	Bī-ni bī-má.

[1] A very similar construction in Assamese may be compared with this, viz :

	Father.	
My......	mór bópai	মোর বোপাই
Your ...	tór baper	তোর বাপের
His......	tár bāpek	তার বাপেক

—[Ed.]

Interrogative pronouns in common use are—

1. Sŭr (sar)—who ?
2. Má—what ? Plural má-fŭr.
3. Bå-bê—which (of two or more) ?

The demonstrative pronouns are :—

1. Bé—this (near).
2. Bŏi—that (far).
3. Bí—that (of remote distance).

Properly speaking, there are no relative pronouns, though a form zi, borrowed from Assamese, is sometimes heard. The place of the relative pronoun is usually supplied by a participle, *e.g.*—

Mi-á nu-nai masá thoi-bai.
yesterday seen tiger died has.

IV. *Verbs.*

1. The verb substantive is dang-a, is, dang-man, was, zá-gan, will be; this last being apparently formed from the root, zá-nŏ, to become. The negative forms are

(1) gŏi-á (emphatic gŏi-li-á) and (2) núng-á, it is not.

A very useful word is náng-go (Assamese lá-ge), to express necessity, the negative form is náng-á, needless, in emphasis, náng-li-á, altogether needless. This root náng is often appended to nouns to form adjectives, as

Be budhi-gnáng (or náng).
He is possessed of sense.

2. Conjugation.

In Kachári the verb undergoes no change to express number or person, which are indicated by the subject alone. But a slight trace of inflexion (euphonic) is perhaps found in the fact that when a verbal root ends in a vowel and the termination begins with one, a disagreeable hiatus is avoided by inserting the letter *i* between the two, thus:—

Tháng-ă—I go.
Nu-i-ŏ—I see.

Taking the verb, Bu-nŏ, to beat, as an illustration, the various tenses, moods, &c., of the Kachári verb may be thus indicated:—

Present indefinite, Ángbú-i-u—I beat.
Present definite, bú-dang—I am beating.
Imperfect, Áng bú-dang-man—I was beating.
Past, bú-bai—I beat (did).
Pluperfect, {bú-dang-man / bú-nai-sè}—I had beaten (some time ago).
Future, bú-gan—I shall beat.

Future (early paulo post), {bú-si-gan / bú-nu-sŏi}—I shall beat (very soon).

Subjunctive mood { If I beat
Ang bú-bá
bú-blá had beaten.

Potential, Áng bú-nŏ há-gô—I may (or can) beat.

Imperative, 1. Bú—beat thou. 2. Bú-tháng—let him beat.

Participial forms :—

Bú-ni—beating.

Bú-na-nŏi—having beaten.

Bú-nai—beaten.

Bú-ŏi—while (on) beating.

Agent :—

Bu-grá.

Bu-nai-á—a beat-er.

3. The Passive voice is not very frequently used. Its tenses, &c., are expressed by conjugating the verb zá-nŏ, to be, with the past participle of the verb, *e.g.*—

Ang bú-nai zá-gan—I beaten be-shall.

4. The *causal* verb is formed in two ways. The more idiomatic method is to prefix the letter *f* (with any euphonic vowel) to the principal verb, *e.g.*—

Ang {rang-dang understand,
fă-rang-dang—I *cause* to understand, I teach.

Ang {sĭ-gan become wet,
fi sĭ-gan—I shall make wet, soak, immense.

In the above it will be observed that the causal force lies in the letter *f*, its vowel (always a very *short* one) being drawn by attraction (euphonic) from that of the principal verb.

A second way of expressing causation is to combine the verb hŏ-nŏ, to give, with the infinitive mood of the principal verb, *e.g.*—

Ang {rang-ă I learn,
rang-nŏ hŏ-i-ŏ I cause to learn, teach.

5. The distinctive vowel of the negative verb is *á*, which in

some cases gives place to *i* or *e*, probably for reasons of euphony. Its chief forms of tense and mood, &c., may be shown thus :—

Present, Bú-á—(I) am not beating.
Imperfect, Bú-á-khŏi-man.

Past { Bú-á-man
Bú-á-khŏi-nŏ
Bú-á-khŏi-se }

Future, Bú-á.
Imperative.—2 Dá bú—beat thou not.
3 Dá-bú-thang—let him not beat.

Subjunctive { Bú-á-bá
Bú-á-blá }

Potential, Bú-nŏ hai-á
Participial forms :—
Present, Bú-i—not beating
Past, Bú-á-lábá—not having beaten, without beating
" Bu-e—not beaten.

V. *Indeclinable words* (*avyāya*).

Very little need be said on this part of the subject, because the work of qualifying words (adverbs, &c.,) is very commonly done by means of infixes following the verbal stem which is in many cases, though not in all, monosyllabic. Thus the root hàm (be) will, becomes (1) an adjective by prefixing g^a, g^a hàm, good ; and (2) an adverb, by affixing ŏi ; g^ahàm-ŏi in a good manner. So, hàm-á—bad ; hàm-à-ŏi—bad-ly. Further the adjective thus formed may be duly conjugated as a verb by combining it with the different tenses, &c., of the substantive verb, thus :—

Bi	hàm-dang	he is { good
	hàm-á-dang	bad }
	(good-not-is)	
	hàm-gan	he will be { good
	hàmá-gán	bad }
	&c.	&c.

In the same way the passive participle in nai can be (1) declined as a noun, or (2) used as an adjective, or (3) take the place of a relative pronoun ; *e.g.*—

1. Zang thoi-nai-kho fóp-bai—we (the) dead (man) buried-have.

2. Miá nu-nai gathai-á thoi-bai—(the) yesterday-seen-girl, died-has.

3. Tezpur-nă tháng-nai-au áng bi-kho nu-bai—Tezpur to going-in I him see-did.

&c. &c.

VI. *Syntax.*

The great and characteristic feature of the Syntax of the language is the remarkable way in which verbal roots, mostly monosyllabic, are combined together to form a very large and useful class of compound verbs. In this way the use of conjunctions &c. is very largely avoided, and the language becomes possessed of a vivid force and picturesqueness often wanting in more cultivated tongues. These compound verbs may perhaps be roughly classified under two groups, *e.g.*—

I.—Those in which each verbal root has a distinct meaning and may be used separately;—

II.—Those in which one or more of the verbal roots is never used separately but in combination only. As illustrations of class I. the following may be mentioned :—

1. Lai-nŏ—to bring.
   Tháng-nŏ—to go
   Åt lai-tháng
   Fire bring-go } (in combination).

2. Há-nŏ—to cut (paddy, &c.)
   Zap-nŏ—finish
   Zang mai há-zap-bai
   We paddy cut-finished-have } (in combination).

3. Tham-nŏ—catch; lábo-nŏ—bring; gorai-kho ham-labó—those horses catch bring.

&c. &c.

The compound verbs of Class II. are very numerous and in frequent use. A few illustrations only can be given here, which may serve to show that the second and subsequent members of the agglutinative verb, while they have no independent

existence, yet serve to enrich and expand the meaning of the primitive root in a very remarkable way.

1. Bai, denotes continuous action.

Bí = to beg; bi-bai-nŏ	= to continue	begging
Bráp = to be angry; bráp-bai-nŏ		being angry
Namai = to seek; namai-bai-nŏ		seeking

2. Láng implies completion.

Bát (jump)	láng	jump across
Udu (sleep)		sleep heavily
Thoi (die)		die outright
Bir (fly)		fly away
Zá (eat)		eat up

3. Su, Thrå are intensitives greatly strengthening the meaning of the first verbal root.

On (love)	su	love much
Ukhui (hunger)		hunger greatly
Mini (laugh)		laugh heartily
Gai (plant)	thrå	plant completely
Ga-glai (fall)		fall heavily
Thoi (die)		die outright

In not a few cases several, sometimes as many as five or six, of these infixes are combined with the original verbal stem, each one materially contributing to enlarge and enrich its meaning. A few illustrations are here supplied.

1. Dáo-frá bír-láng-thrå-bai.
   The birds flown completely away-have.
2. Áng bi-kho bai-nái-thá-bai.
   I him continue-watching-did.
3. Nu-zá-nai-sŏi-lá-tháng.
   See-become-watch-much-take-go, *i.e.* go and see and take and observe carefully.

&c. &c.

From what little has been here stated it would seem to be fairly obvious that the language in its original form is strictly an agglutinative one. But a gradual process of deglutinisation has for some time been going on, no doubt originating through intercourse with neighbours speaking languages of quite another type, *e.g.* Assamese, Bengali, &c. Most Kacháris (Bårå) in this district are quite familiar with Assamese; indeed, it is very

rarely that the writer has met with men who did not know this form of Aryan speech. Now a Kachári in the habit of speaking Assamese will, even when using his own mother tongue, to which he is strongly attached, not infrequently resort to a partially inflected form of expression instead of restricting himself to the use of infixes, &c. This gradual change in the language is especially brought out in the usage of the participial forms of the verb. It has been shown above, *e.g.* that the past participle (passive) can be declined like a noun. Again, in expressing a simple sentence like the following:—

I ran and caught and brought the horse

an Assamese speaking Kachári would probably make use of the active participle in ná-nŏi; whilst his more primitive brother, who might be less familiar with Assamese, would confine himself to the more idiomatic use of infixes. Thus the sentence given above might be expressed in two ways:

Áng gorai-kho {Khàt-nanŏi ham-nánŏi / Khàt-ham} lóbo-bai.

I the horse {running catching / run-catch} bring-did.

It would seem to be not improbable that the language may gradually lose its agglutinative character, and approximate to the inflected type, though the process most likely will be but a slow one, owing to the very *clannish* temperament of the people which makes them cling strongly to anything they regard as their very own, *e.g.* their language (*cf.*, a somewhat similar state of things in Wales and the Scottish Highlands). But in its present stage the language is one of no small interest to the student of comparative philology, because it is an apt illustration of a form of speech which, once strictly agglutinative, is now in process of learning inflexion through the pressure of contact with the speakers of Aryan tongues.[1]

[1] The writer would again refer the student to Dr. Grierson's work, part 7–15, where the whole subject of the agglutinative verb with its stem and infixes, &c., is dealt with admirable force, clearness and knowledge of the subject.—[S. E.]

APPENDIX I

I.—Tribes closely allied to Kacháris.

In a former section, something has been said in favour of the idea that the Kachári race is a much more widely distributed one than was supposed to be the case some years ago; and members of this race under different names still occupy large areas in north-eastern India. It may be useful to add a few brief notes on some of the principal of these closely cognate tribes, confining our notice mainly to those points and details wherein they differ more or less from the Kacháris of Darrang, whose language, habits, religion, etc., as described above, may perhaps be provisionally taken as a standard.

1. *Garos.*—One of the most important of these allied races is undoubtedly that known to us as the Garos, dwelling in what is called the Garo Hills District. This tribe, like the people of the North Cachar Hills, has until recent years been largely confined to the part of Assam which bears it name, and has not come into contact with Hinduism to any great extent, and hence it has in all likelihood preserved its aboriginal manners and customs almost intact. But it is not necessary here to do more than merely mention the name of this interesting people, as their whole manner of life has been sufficiently dealt with elsewhere by a highly competent hand.[1]

2. *Mech* (*Mes*). 70,000.—Nor is it necessary to do much more for the people known as Mech (*Mes*) who are undoubtedly merely a branch (the western one) of the Bårås of Darrang. The name is almost certainly a corruption of the Sanskrit word mleccha, *i.e.*, an outcast from the Brahmin point of view, a non-observer of caste regulations; such persons being in the light of modern Hinduism very much what the barbarian was to the Greek, or the "Gentile" to the Jew, some twenty

[1] See *The Garos*, by Major A. Playfair, David Nutt. 1909.—Ed.

centuries ago. This term *mlech* (*mech*) is not in use here (Darrang) or in Kamrup.

The uncomplimentary epithet "*mlech padre*" has sometimes been hurled at the writer when preaching to Brahmins or other high caste Hindus, though it would seem to be the recognised name for the Bårå race from the Manás river westwards to the neighbourhood of Jalpaiguri. They would seem to be especially numerous in Goalpara district, where one of the principal landholders is known as the "Mech-párá zamindár." Some sixteen exogamous septs are recognised among the Meches, of which the most important would seem to be the following:—

Sub-division.

1. Meshá-árŏi—the tiger folk
2. Bánsbár-árŏi—bamboo folk
3. Dŏim-árŏi—water folk
4. Goibár-árŏi—betelnut folk
5. Swarg-árŏi—heaven folk.

Of these the last-mentioned, which is obviously of Hindu origin, is looked upon as the highest, whilst the names of the remaining four are apparently of totemistic origin. The first on the list, *Mashá-arŏi* (tiger folk; *Mashá*, tiger), still retains a certain hold on the regard of the members of its sept, all of whom go into a kind of mourning (see above) when a tiger is found lying dead near one of their villages.

Origin.

Nothing definite is known as to the origin of the Meches; by some they are said to be descended from Bhim and Hidamba, whilst others maintain that they are the descendants of Turbasu, son of Raja Jajáti, who fell under his father's curse, his children thus becoming outcasts (*Mlecchas*).

Religion.

Their religion is distinctly of the Animistic type with a tendency towards Hinduism, Batháu being replaced by Śiva in some cases. The *siju* tree is regarded with much reverence, and is to be seen in the courtyard of most Mech houses, much more frequently than among the Kacháris of this district. This sacred tree is sometimes used as a means of divination or detecting crime or other misdoings in domestic life.

Marriage and funeral ceremonies.

In all ceremonies relating to marriage and funerals, what has been already said of the Kacháris holds good almost word for word of the Meches. But speaking generally it may be said that the marriage rites among the Meches are more simple than among the Kacháris, the essential features being the exchange of betel-leaves and areca-nuts between bride and bridegroom followed by the offering of a cock and hen in sacrifice to Batháu or Śiva. The funeral ceremonies, on the



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other hand, among the Meches are perhaps somewhat more elaborate than is the case with the Kacháris (Bårå), as an informal Shrádh has to be performed by them, by the son or daughter of the deceased Mech, seven or nine or eleven days after death, and sometimes on the day of the funeral itself, an indication that Hindu customs are creeping in among this portion of the Bårå race.

The name of this tribe (Rábhás) is of uncertain derivation **3. Rábhás (70,000).** and in this district (Darrang) the people themselves are sometimes called Totlás, which may perhaps be a nickname. Another term used in designating them is *Dătiyál Kachári*, *i.e.* Borderer Kacháris (*dáti*—border, edge, boundary); and it is held by some that their original home and habitat was the **Habitat.** region *bordering* on the northern slopes of the Garo Hills. This supposition is partly confirmed by the fact that the only words in their language to express (1) north and (2) south, respectively, are (1) *Bhotá hi-chu*, Bhotan Hills,[1] and (2) *Tura*; their physical horizon being apparently absolutely limited by the two localities thus designated; moreover, Rábhás in somewhat large numbers are still to be found at the base of the northern slope of the Garo Hills. Some 30,000 have their home in Goalpara district, whilst others are located in Kamrup, north-west Darrang, and among the Garos in their hills. Their origin **Origin (traditional).** is but imperfectly known, but they are said to be descended from a Hindu father who lost caste by marrying a Kachári woman. Their language, which would seem to be rapidly dying out, **Language.** forms a very interesting link between Garo and Kachári, having much in common with both, but with some special features peculiar to itself. Like the tongue of other branches of the Bårå race, the Rábhá language, at one time undoubtedly agglutinative, seems to be in process of becoming inflexional, through contact and intercourse with the speakers of more or less broken-down Sanskritic languages, *e.g.*, Bengali, Assamese, etc. Some seven sub-tribes are said to be still **Sub-divisions.** recognised among the Rábhás, *i.e.*, Rangdaniya, Maitariyá, Páti-Koch, Bitliyá, Dáhuriyá, and Sanghá. The members of the three sub-tribes first in this list occupy a position of some eminence above the others, and are at liberty to intermarry among themselves. They are, however, so far "hypergamous" that if any one of their members should marry into any of the last four sub-tribes, the person so marrying would have to pay a fine of Rs. 100, or upwards, to the members of the lower sub-tribe concerned. As regards caste-position and status, **Social (caste) status.** the Rábhás hold themselves to be slightly higher than the pure

[1] *Hi-chu*, *i.e.*, *hi* earth, *chi* high : *cf.* Kachári *há-jo*, *i.e.*, *há* earth, *gajo*, high.

Kacháris, *e.g.*, the Rábhá will not eat rice cooked by a Kachári, though the latter freely partakes of food prepared by a Rábhá. On the other hand, the Rábhá eats and drinks quite as freely as does the Kachári, and intermarriage between the two branches of the race is not very uncommon, a young Kachári bridegroom selecting a Rábhá bride having to make his peace with her people by giving them a feast and paying a bride-price (*gá-dhan*) on a somewhat enhanced scale. The children born of such a "mixed marriage" belong to the father's tribe. Kacháris sometimes formally enter the Rábhá community, though it is not necessary for them to do so, on their way to Hinduism. A Kachári wishing to be received into the Rábhá sub-tribe has to pass through a somewhat elaborate initiation, which may be briefly summarised as follows:—

Admission of a Kachári convert into the Rábhá community.

"A *deori* (Priest) divides a pig into seven pieces in front of the convert's door, and disposes of them by throwing away one such piece towards each of the four cardinal points; while of the remaining three pieces one is thrown skywards, a second earthwards, and the last Patálwards.[1] At the same place he then proceeds to cook a fowl and prepares therefrom a curry, which he divides into seven equal parts; and arranging these portions on the ground he leaves them there, after sprinkling them with pad-jal.[2] This part of the ceremonial is known as *chíládhar*, or *báodhar katá, i.e.*, forms of making *práyaś-chitta* (reconciliation). The *deori* then lays down a plantain-leaf on the courtyard and places on it a lighted lamp, a handful of rice, a betel-leaf, and an areca-nut, together with some *tulasi* leaves and a few copper coins. The convert is then made to drink *pad-jal* in public, and after this he must pay at least one rupee to the assembled people, and treat them to two vessels full of rice-beer (*mådh*). He is further required to entertain liberally the members of his newly-acquired brotherhood for three successive evenings, pork and *mådh* forming the principal materials of the feast."

Religion.

Very little need be said under the head of religion; for in this respect they are but little separated from the closely-cognated Kachári (Bårå) race. The general type of the Rábhá religion is distinctly animistic; but one or two of the higher subdivisions, especially the Pátis, are said to show a leaning

[1] "Patál," one of the seven regions which Hindus believe to exist under the earth.

[2] *Pad-jal*, *i.e.*, *pad* a foot, and *jal* water, "foot-water"; water in which a Gosain has dipped his foot, or (at least) his great toe, and which is therefore looked upon as sacred. It is otherwise known as *charanámrita*, *i.e.*, *charan* foot, and *ámrita*, *umta* ambrosia.

towards Hinduism of the Śákta form, the deity chiefly worshipped being known as Bhalli (? Bhareli), to whom *puja* is done in Kārtik, Māgh and Baisākh. There are no temples or fixed places of worship, nor are Brahmins employed; the *deori* (*deosi*) doing all that is deemed necessary in public religious ceremonies.

Relations of the sexes.

Marriage is almost invariably adult, and is usually entered into by payment to the bride's parents, or by servitude as among the Kacháris. Cases of ante-nuptial unchastity would seem to be rare; but when an unmarried girl does become pregnant, she is compelled to disclose the name of her lover, often through thes *iju*-ordeal process (see above), and public opinion forces the seducer to marry his victim, paying a somewhat higher bride-price (*gá-dhan*) than he would otherwise have done. Monogamy is the rule in marriage, but public opinion permits the taking of a second wife when the first proves childless. Divorce is permitted for adultery, but would seem to be comparatively rare: widows are at liberty to marry whomsoever they will, except the deceased husband's elder brother, a second bride-price being sometimes paid to the bride's parents. The marriage ceremony itself is very simple, the essential features being (1) the exchange of betel-leaves and areca-nuts by bride and bridegroom, and (2) the formal sacrifice of a cock and hen, the latter being made into a curry of which bride and bridegroom partake together. The dead are disposed of generally by cremation, though in cases of destructive epidemics, *e.g.*, cholera, kálá-azár, etc., known as "*sirkári rog*," the bodies of deceased people are either hastily buried, or simply thrown into the neighbouring jungle.[1]

4. Hajongs—Haijongs. (8,000).

About the small tribe (8,000 souls) known as Hajongs or Haijongs only very little definite information can at present be obtained; but it seems probable on the whole that they are a branch of the widely spread Bårå race. The tribal name is of uncertain derivation, but it is not unlikely that it is connected with the Kachári word for mountain or hill (*ha-jo*); and this supposition receives, perhaps, some little confirmation from their present known habitat, *i.e.*, the southern slope of the Garo Hills, and the sub-montane tract immediately adjoining it. It is possible that these people may be the modern representatives of the inhabitants of the old kingdom of Koch Hajo, which corresponds roughly with the present district of Goalpara. It is known that during the period 1600–1700 this part of the country was overrun by Musalmán invaders, when many of the inhabitants probably took refuge in the Garo Hills,

[1] For other information about Garos, see *Garo Monograph*, pp. 17, 19, 21. —Ed.

returning therefrom, and settling in the adjoining plains at the foot of these hills, when the *pax Britannica* gave them a certain amount of security for life and property. In appearance and dress the people are said to have a close resemblance to the well-known Kachári type, but this resemblance hardly holds good of their language as now spoken, for this is little more than a medley of Assamese and Bengali.

Religion. There are said to be two recognised subdivisions among them, *i.e.*, (1) Byabcháris and (2) Paramárthis. The latter are largely Hinduized (Vaishnabs) and abstain from pork and liquor, etc.; whilst the former, who are Śáktas to a large extent, follow the practice of their Garo neighbours in matters of diet, etc. In spite, however, of this distinction of meats, it is said that members of the two sections of the tribe freely intermarry with each other. No Brahmins seem to be employed among them, any leading member (*adhikári*) of the village *pancháyat* doing what is customary at all marriages, etc. It may be added that the siju tree (*euphorbia splendens*) which occupies so important a place in the social and religious life of the Bårå, Meches, etc., on the north of the Brahmaputra does not seem to enjoy any special regard or respect among the cognate tribes (Haijangs, Dimásá etc.) who have their homes on the south and east of that great river.

Relations of the sexes, marriage, &c. As among other members of the Bårå race, the relations of the sexes are on the whole sound and wholesome; ante-nuptial unchastity is but of rare occurrence, but when it does take place and pregnancy follows, the seducer is compelled to marry the girl, and to pay a certain fine of no great amount to the village elders. This form of union is known as a *dái-márá* marriage. But generally, as among the Kacháris of Darrang, the parents of bride and bridegroom arrange for the marriage of the young people, which always includes the payment of a bride-price (*pån*) of from 20 to 100 rupees to the bride's parents, or the equivalent in personal service. It is said that among the "Paramárthi" subdivision, who are largely Hinduized, the betrothal of children is coming into vogue, but as a rule marriage is still adult, and for the most part monogamous. A second wife is allowed when the first proves to be childless, but polyandry is quite unknown. Divorce is permitted for adultery but is very rare, and under no circumstances can a woman be divorced when in a state of pregnancy. The divorce itself is effected in the usual way by the husband and wife tearing a betel-leaf in the presence of the village elders, and formally addressing each other as father and mother, showing that the relation of husband and wife has ceased. Widows can marry

again, and do so freely, the one restriction being that no widow can marry her deceased husband's brother, whether older or younger than her first partner. Here again, too, it would seem that Hindu influence is making itself felt, for it is said that the remarriage of widows is looked upon with growing disfavour. Property, both movable and immovable, is usually divided equally among the sons of a family (*cf.* the old Saxon law of "gavelkind"), anything like primogeniture being unknown. In a formal marriage among well-to-do people a certain ceremonial is observed. A square enclosure is formed by planting a plantain-tree at each corner, and within this enclosure are placed sixteen lighted lamps, and sixteen earthenware pots full of water, the bridegroom taking his stand in their midst. The bride then formally walks around him seven times, and then finally takes a seat at his left side, her face being turned towards the east. No *mantras*, etc., are recited, nor is any Brahmin present; but some village elder (*adhikári*) sprinkles water over the couple from one of the water pots, and the ceremony is held to be complete.

The bodies of the dead are occasionally buried or committed to the jungle, but this is done but rarely, probably only under the pressure of panic during an epidemic of cholera, etc. Cremation is almost universal, the head of the deceased being placed towards the north, the face looking upwards in the case of a man, and downwards in that of a woman. A Sráddha usually follows either on the tenth, or the thirtieth, day after the cremation. **Disposal of dead.**

Not much is definitely known about this small tribe, whose numbers do not exceed 6,000 in all; but although they are said to repudiate all connection with the Bårå race, it may be safely inferred that they do in reality belong to it; for on this point the evidence of language is fairly conclusive.[1] They are sometimes known as (1) Morán Kacháris and (2) Kapáhiyás (*kapáh*—cotton), the latter name being due to the fact that in early days one of their chief duties was to grow cotton for the use of Áhom princesses, at Kákatal, Moriáni, Jhánzi, Hologápár, etc. Their present habitat may be roughly described as the country lying between the Buri Dihing and the Brahmaputra in the north-eastern part of the Province at least one-half of their number being located in the district of Lakhimpur, and the remainder in the adjoining portions of the Sibsagar district. Their chief centre is said to be a place known as Kákatal, the residence of the Tiphuk Gosain, the head of the Matak clan, **5. Moráns (5,800); Animistic, 100; Hinduized, 5,700. Names. Habitat.**

[1] See paper by Major P. R. T. Gurdon, in *Journal of A. S. B.*, Vol. LXXIII., Part I, No. 1, 1904.

with the members of which the Moráns are said to fraternize and even to intermarry freely.

Origin (traditional).

The original home of the Moráns is said to have been at Mongkong (Maingkhwang) in the Hukong Valley at the upper reaches of the Chindwin river, where some centuries ago resided three brothers Moylang, Morán, and Moyrán. Of these, Moylang, the eldest, remained in the Hukong Valley, whilst the youngest, Moyrán, migrated into Nipál, and was there lost sight of; and Morán, the second brother, passed the Patkoi range into Assam and, settling on the Tiphuk river, became the ancestor of or at least gave its present name to the Morán tribe. But however this may be, it is fairly certain that, when the Áhoms passed into Assam about the middle of the thirteenth century, they at once came into conflict with the Moráns, whom they seem to have subdued with but little difficulty. By their Áhom conquerors the Moráns were employed in various menial capacities, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, and were sometimes known as Hábungiyás,[1] earth-folk, or true autochthones, "sons of the soil," though they seem to have intermarried freely with their Áhom rulers. But in spite of their subordinate position in political life the Moráns, like other branches of the Bârâ race, have sturdily maintained some of their national characteristics to this day, *e.g.*, their language, though apparently doomed to early extinction, is still to some extent retained by members of the clan.

Religion. Vaishnab.

In the census of 1891 only 100 Moráns are returned as animistic, the great bulk of them being described as Hindus of the Vaishnab type. Their Hinduism, however, would seem to be of a somewhat lax character; for though they do not eat beef, pork, or monkeys, or drink madh and photiká, yet they freely partake of all kinds of poultry and fish, with the tortoise, grasshopper, etc. No social stigma, too, attaches to the catching and selling of fish to others. No idols are to be seen in their villages, nor are Brahmins ever employed in religious ceremonials, certain officials known as Medhis and Bhakats doing all that is deemed necessary on these occasions. On certain great social gatherings known as Sabhá (Samáj), which are apparently not held at any fixed periods, there is much singing, beating of drums (Mridang) and cymbals (tál) in honour of Krishna, to whom offerings of rice, salt, plantains, betel-nuts, are freely made. In earlier times it is said that there were three chief centres (satras) of the religious life of the Moráns; each

[1] *Hábung-iyá*, perhaps from *há* earth, *bung* for *su-bung* men; hence *ha-bung-iya*, autochthones, *adscripti glebæ*, something like the serfs of the old feudal system in Europe.

presided over by an elder known as the burá or dángariyá. These were the (1) Dinja (Kachari burá), (2) Garpará (Áhom burá), and (3) Puranimáti (Khátwál burá). These dángariyás are said still to retain a position of some spiritual influence among the Moráns, all religious teaching being in their hands. Each family may freely choose its own dángariyás, but followers of one dángariyá will not eat food cooked by those of another, even when the worshippers are closely connected with each other by family ties, as father, son, brother, etc.

Infant betrothals would seem to be absolutely unknown, all marriages being restricted to adults, as a rule monogamous, though a second wife may be taken when the first proves childless. Occasionally the bridegroom carries off his bride by force, especially during the April Bihu, the union formed in this way being afterwards recognised by the girl's parents. Sometimes the bride goes to her lover's house of her own free will, without payment of the usual bride-price (pån). But as a rule as among other portions of the Bårå race, matrimonial engagements are entered into after negotiations between the parents of the persons concerned. The essential elements of a marriage in this case are (1) the payment of a bride-price (pån) of some Rs20–100 to the girl's parents, and (2) the giving of a feast at the bridegroom's expense to the parents, relatives, and friends of the bride. The marriage ceremony is always non-Shástric, nor are Brahmins present, a Bhakat or dángariyá doing all that is deemed necessary. The ceremony itself may perhaps be described as "semi-chacklang," some, though not all, of the rites practised among the Áhoms at what is called a *chaklang* marriage being frequently carried out. Marriages, etc.

Divorce is permitted occasionally, but only when the wife is guilty of adultery with a man of lower caste-standing than her own. In these cases the husband brings back the erring wife to her father's house with some betel-nuts and one rupee in an earthenware *sarái*; the father receives her and gives back a portion of the betel-nuts to the husband, and the woman is at once free to marry again. Widows are at liberty to remarry, but not with the deceased husband's brother; but little or on ceremonial is observed at such a remarriage, a widow taking a substantially lower position than a virgin bride. Divorce.

The dead are usually disposed of by burial, but the bodies of old Bhakats are sometimes cremated, the ashes being afterwards buried under a high earth mound known as a "moidám." On the third day after death takes place the ceremony known as *telani*, when the near relatives are anointed with mustard seed Disposal of dead.

oil (tel). This is followed ten days later by the *dahá*,[1] when offerings of rice, salt, betel-nuts, etc., are offered by the relatives, and finally, after an interval of twenty days, the *dahá káj* is celebrated, when a general feast takes place both day and night. These observances have perhaps more in common with funeral wakes than with what is known among Hindus as a shráddha; no Brahmins are present.

6. Chutiyas (87,691). Deori Chutiyas, 4,000. Habitat. This once very powerful race, which still numbers almost 90,000 souls, has its chief home and habitat in the districts of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar, though a not inconsiderable number are found in the Darrang district (Mangaldai subdivision). Their general appearance and physical and mental characteristics prove clearly that they belong to the widely spread Bârâ race, and this view is borne out by the language still spoken to some extent by one of the subdivisions of the race (the Deoris), which has very much in common with the Kachári of Darrang, and still more with the speech of the people (Dimásá) of the north Kachar Hills.

Traditional origin and history. Their origin is far from being clearly known. According to one tradition—probably the outcome of Hindu imaginativeness —they claim to be descendants of Khetrias who fled into Assam for refuge from the destroying arm of Paraśu-Ram (battle-axe Ram). But according to a tradition embodied in an old Assamese chronicle of uncertain date, the founder of the Chutiya kingdom, for some 200 years a very powerful one, was one Bihar (? Virapála), who is said to have had his home on "Golden Hill" (Suvarṇa-giri) in the mountains to the north of the modern Sadiya, which place was for a lengthened period the centre of Chutiya power, before the advent of the Áhoms in the 15th century. It is said that Kuvera (the Hindu Pluto) appeared to this Bihar, who was simply an ordinary peasant, and urged him to be reconciled to his wife (Rupavati), with whom he had quarrelled, as she was about to present him with a son who should make a name in history. Moreover, he was directed to make search under a certain tree where he would find a shield, a sword, and a spear; and underneath the shield a golden cat, which latter he was to preserve with the utmost care, as it was to be the talisman of his family's fortunes. Kuvera's instructions were duly carried out by Bihar, to whom a son was born, named Ratnadhwaj, who through force of character established his influence in the mountains; and then descending to the plains established a powerful kingdom at Sadiya which maintained itself there for over two centuries, when it fell before the rapidly growing influence of the warlike Áhoms. In

[1] *I.e.*, *daśā*, the tenth.—Ed.

order finally to break up the power of the Chutiyas their Áhom conquerors are said to have distributed the subjugated race over Assam and north-east Bengal. One not inconsiderable portion of the Mangaldai subdivision is still known as Chutiya deś; otherwise Kaupáti. To this Machiavellian policy of the Áhom rulers is perhaps due the present widely scattered condition of the once powerful Kachári race.

There are four subdivisions of the Chutiya race still recognised, viz.: **Sub-divisions (modern).**

1. Hindu Chutiya.
2. Áhom Chutiya.
3. Deori Chutiya—the Levite or priestly clan.
4. Baráhi Chutiya—the pig-eating clan.

Each of these subdivisions is said to have been in early days endogamous, though this is hardly so now, for members of the two upper clans can intermarry, and the same statement holds good of the two lower (Deori and Baráhi); but outside these limits marriage is said to be prohibited. The Hindu and Áhom Chutiyas have very largely adopted Hinduism of the Vaishnava type; but it is said that occasionally they indulge in secluded midnight revels known as "ráti soá khoá," at which almost all kinds of food (beef alone excepted) are very freely consumed. The Deoris and Baráhis, however, still follow largely certain animistic rites; so far as they have adopted Hinduism at all, it would seem to be of a depraved type, Tantric rather than Vedic.

The Deoris. By far the most interesting, because the most primitive, characteristic of the four subdivisions of the Chutiya race mentioned above, is that which holds the third place in the list; *i.e.*, the Deoris. It has been stated before more than once that this term Deoris is thus used to designate the recognised ministers of religion throughout the Bårå race; and this points to the fact that they are essentially what indeed their tribal name implies, a Levite or priestly body, and one in earlier days possessed of large influence which even yet has not been wholly lost. In point of mere numbers they are certainly not a powerful body, somewhat less than 4,000 all told. Their chief habitat is on and near the Dikrang river some thirty miles west of the subdivisional station of North Lakhimpur, while other villages may be found in the Májuli, the "Holy Land" of the modern (Hindu) Assamese, where they would seem to lead a very simple primitive life. A Deori Chutiya village has been well described as follows.

"It consists of some thirty houses built on bamboo platforms

raised about five feet from the ground. A single house will often contain a family of forty persons, living in one great room without any compartments, though with separate fireplaces, with a verandah in front where visitors are entertained. The villagers are a tall, large, well-nourished folk, with features bearing a strong resemblance to that of the Kacháris. They drink strong liquor (home-made) and eat all kinds of flesh except beef."

Language. There are two things which give a certain interest and importance to the Deoris in spite of the paucity of their numbers, *i.e.*, (1) their language and (2) their religion Like other members of the widely spread Bårå race, the Deoris are bilingual, speaking both Assamese and their own tongue, but giving a distinct preference to the latter, of which they are said to be not a little proud.[1] The language itself is obviously very closely allied to that of the Kacháris of Darrang and still more so to the speech of the people of the North Kachár Hills (Dimásá), who, being more isolated from the plains than are the Kacháris, have no doubt preserved their mother tongue very largely in its primitive form. In all likelihood the language of the Deori Chutiyás gives us the purest and most archaic form of the Bårå speech, and there can be little doubt that in earlier times it was the dominant language of Eastern Assam.

The religion of the Deori Chutiyás is still largely animistic. There are a number of domestic gods, who hold a prominent place in family worship, and puja is often performed under big trees and by the side of rivers, as among the Darrang Kacháris. The Brahmaputra is held in special reverence and is spoken of as the mother of water (ji chimá, or chimá jimá) much as the Darrang Kacháris regard this huge volume of water as "Mater magna" (Hodgson).

Unlike the western Kacháris, however, the Deori Chutiyás pay no special regard to the 'siju' tree (*Euphorbia splendens*), a peculiarity which they share with the Dimásá, Lálungs, Gáros,[2] and other members of the Bårå family who have their home mostly on the south of the great river. They have four great annual festivals, two of which correspond in some respects to the Assamese Mágh and Baisák Bihu, though not held exactly on the same dates. They have a great reputation

[1] See *Outline Grammar of the Deori Chutiya Language*, by W. B. Brown, B.A., I.C.S., Shillong, Assam Secretariat Press, a scholarly work to which the writer gladly takes this opportunity of acknowledging his manifold obligations.

[2] But the Gáros plant either a *mandal* tree or a Euphorbia cactus near their *Kosi* or sacrificial stones, hence recognising the sacred character of the *siju* tree (see *Gáro Monograph*, p. 97).—Ed.

as wizards, etc., and are supposed to have the power of causing their enemies to die mysteriously of slow occult wasting diseases, and in this way they are often consulted by their neighbours in cases of loss of cattle or undetected robberies. There would seem to be three principal gods:—

(1) Girasi-girá (Burá-buri), *i.e.*, "the old ones," always spoken of as a wedded pair (*cf.* the "Bathau and the Mainau" of the Darrang Kacháris and the "Warang-Berang," 'the old one' of Hodgson's Dhimals); they are specially worshipped by the Dibongiá khel, and their original temple was on the Kundil river, a little east of Sadiya.

(2) Pisha-dema (Bohza-hemata), "the elder son" worshipped by the Tengá pániya khel. His temple stood on Tengápáni river.

(3) Pisha-si, "the daughter," known as (1) Támeshwari mái, the "mother of the copper temple," and (2) Kechá-kháti, the "raw-flesh eater," to whom human sacrifices were offered. She was worshipped by the Bargaya (Borgoniya) khel and her temple stood somewhere near "Chunpura" ('lime-kiln') on the Brahmaputra a few miles east of Sadiya.

In addition to these a fourth khel, Pátorgiya, is said to have once existed, but its status was inferior to those of the other three, and it has consequently become extinct. To each of these khels and temples four priests (pujáris) were attached, *i.e.*, (1) a Bor Deori (Deori Dima) and (2) a Saru Deori (Deori Sarbá); and (3) a Bor Bharáli, and (4) a Saru Bharáli.[1] It is the former two (the Deoris), who alone perform the sacrifice, enter the temple and sing hymns, etc., which are hardly now understood by the laity. The office of the Bharális was an inferior one; it was their duty to collect all temple-offerings and to provide animals for sacrifice. They are also privileged to hold the head of the victim, which is nowadays usually a goat. As a rule no images, etc., are to be seen in the temples, though such images would seem to be provided from time to time as needed for purposes of public worship.

Human sacrifices (Nara-bali).

Of the Deori temples mentioned above the oldest and most noteworthy is undoubtedly that known as the "Támar ghar" or copper temple, at Chunpura, the ruins of which are, it is said, still to be seen some miles east of Sadiya. It is described as a small stone building nearly square, built without cement, the stones joined by iron pins, not clamped. The roof, now fallen in, was of copper; hence the temple's name. The interior is eight feet square; and the whole is enclosed by a brick wall 130 feet by 200. Near the grand entrance in the western wall is a

[1] *Bar* = big, *saru* = small.—Ed.

small stone tripod. Here from a period unknown down to a comparatively recent date human sacrifices were offered year by year. It is said that latterly the Áhom kings gave up for this purpose malefactors who had been sentenced to capital punishment; but as suitable victims of this type were not always forthcoming, a certain special tribe (khel) of the king's subjects were held bound to provide one and in return the members of this tribe were entitled to certain privileges, *e.g.*, exemption from payment of ferry dues and market tolls, etc. It was necessary in all cases that the victims should be of high caste and "without blemish,"[1] the slightest mutilation, even the boring of an ear, rendering them unfit to be offered.

All Brahmins and members of the royal family were exempted as a privilege; whilst Domes, Haris, Musalmáns and women were excluded as unfit. For some time preceding the sacrifice the victim to be immolated was detained at the temple and sumptuously fed there, until he attained a sufficiently plump condition to suit the assumed taste of the flesh-eating goddess. On the appointed day he was led forth, magnificently attired and decorated with gold and silver ornaments, to be shown to the crowds assembled for the occasion. He was then led away and taken, by a private path trodden only by the officiating priests and their victims, to the brink of a deep pit, where he was divested of his gay attire and decapitated so that the body fell into the pit. The head was added to a heap of ghastly skulls that were piled up before the shrine. The exact date when these fearful sacrifices ceased does not seem to be definitely known. Lieutenant (afterwards Colonel) Dalton, from whose highly interesting paper most of the above details are taken, states that they were in vogue down to the time when the Áhom Government was superseded by that of the Burmese, when the Deoris finally withdrew from the neighbourhood of the "copper temple." Mr. Brown, on the other hand, tells us that these human sacrifices were abolished at a somewhat earlier date by Raja Gaurinath, who, also being unable to protect the Deoris from the Mishmis and other tribes, removed them to the Májuli,[2] where some of their villages are still to be found.

Marriage, etc. As among other branches of the Bârâ race, infant betrothal is unknown, no marriage being permitted until puberty is attained. Monogamy is the rule among Deoris and Baráhis; but a second wife is allowed where the first proves childless.

[1] *Cf.* the old Jewish law regarding animals for sacrifice being "without blemish," Exodus, xii., 5; Leviticus, xxii. 19-21.

[2] A long island in the Brahmaputra.—Ed.

Polygamy is common among Hindu and Áhom Chutiyas, but polyandry is quite unknown. Marriages are generally planned and arranged by the parents of the young people concerned, a bride-price varying from Rs. 10 to Rs. 100 being paid to the bride's parents by those of the bridegroom, or an equivalent given in service in the bride's household (*cf.* Genesis, xxix. 15–20 : Jacob serving Laban seven years for Rachel).

The actual marriage ceremony seems to vary considerably in the four different clans (khels) which compose the Chutiya community. With the two lower sections, *i.e.*, the Deoris and Baráhis, it consists in a feast given by the bridegroom's people to the friends and fellow-villagers of the bride, accompanied by much singing of songs, etc., in honour of the clan gods and goddesses, whilst with not a few even this simple ceremonial is dispensed with, and the young man claims his bride by merely placing bracelets on her wrists and a string of beads, etc., on her neck (Kháru and mani pindhoá).[1] But among the Áhom and Deori Chutiyas, who claim a somewhat higher position than the other two sections, a more elaborate ceremonial is observed. The Áhom Chutiyas to some extent still observe the form of marriage characteristic of their race, *i.e.*, that known as the Chaklang. There is an exchange of *temi* and *katári* between bride and bridegroom, who are made formally to inhale the smell of turmeric together, and this is followed by the tying of the nuptial knot (lagun gáthi), and the distribution of simple refreshments (jal-pán) among the assembled friends and relatives; and finally the bridegroom is said to carry off his bride through a hole cut in the corner of the house, this last proceeding being perhaps a survival of the time when marriage by capture or stealth was not unknown. With the Hindu Chutiyas there is a still more elaborate ceremonial in vogue, one which approximates somewhat closely to the orthodox Hindu ideal. The *chaklang* form is superseded by that of the 'hom,' *i.e.*, libations of clarified butter (ghi) are formally poured in sacrifice on the sacred fire, and certain special mantras are recited by the officiating priest in the presence of the bride and bridegroom, who are formally seated by his side, and formally united by the tying of the nuptial knot (lagun-gáthi). It is said, further, that matrimonial etiquette requires postponement of consummation of the marriage for a week or so after the completion of the wedding ceremonial.

Divorce, widow, remarriage, etc.

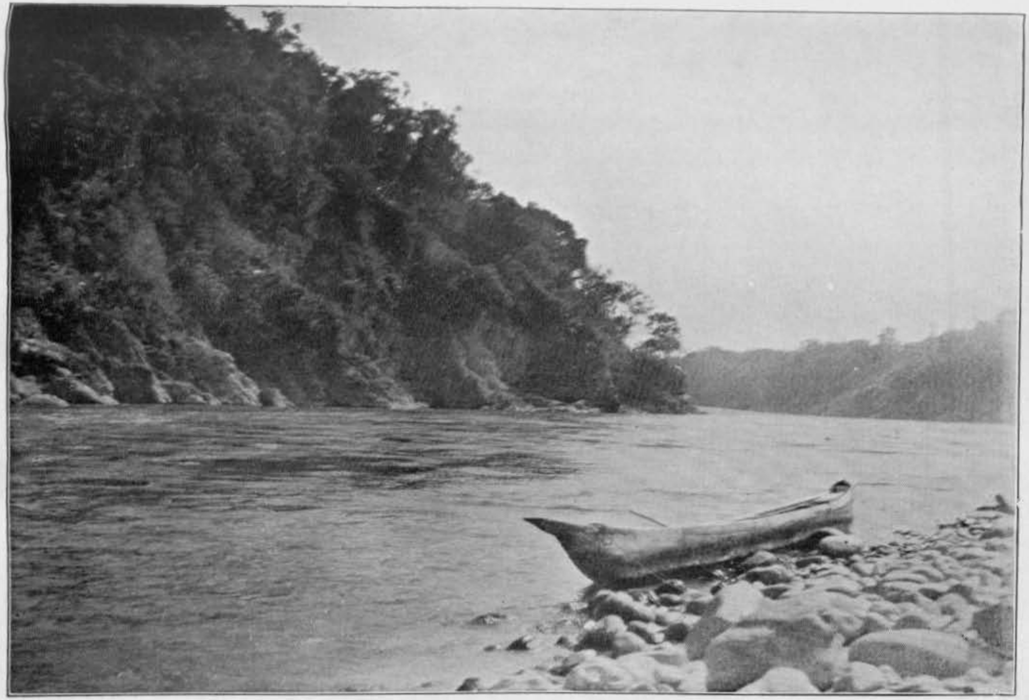
Divorce, which would seem to be not very common, may and usually does follow adultery on the part of the wife, the adulterer paying a fine of Rs. 500 to the injured husband, and

[1] *I.e.*, the putting on of *khắru* (bracelets) and *mani* (necklace).—Ed.

further being compelled to provide a home for the erring woman, whom no respectable man of the tribe would consent to marry. The form used in cases of divorce is the usual one of tearing a betel-leaf (pán-chirá) together by the husband and the wife. The remarriage of widows is permitted with few, if any, restrictions; but as a rule the full marriage ceremonial, whether 'hom' or 'chaklang,' is not observed in such widow remarriages.

Disposal of the dead.

The bodies of the dead are usually disposed of by burning, except in cases of epidemics, when, through panic or like cause, they are thrown into the jungle, or left to perish where they fall. The cremation is generally followed by a funeral feast, lasting for a period of from five to nine days, either at the deceased's house or at the river-side where the body was burnt. A shrádh with feasting of the dead man's relatives takes place usually at the end of a month after the cremation. This shrádh marks the closing of the period of mourning, which in the case of an adult extends over about thirty days, during which period no flesh or fish may be eaten, though rice, ghi and potatoes are allowed. In the case of those who die in childhood no shrádh is observed, though the bereaved family usually go into mourning for some three days.



GORGE OF THE RIVER MANAS.
From a Photograph by Mrs. H. A. Colquhoun

APPENDIX II[1]

To the stories taken by Mr. Endle from my little collection of Kachári folk-tales, I have ventured to add the following three tales, with an interlinear literal translation and some brief linguistic notes. This I have done in order to follow the example set in Sir C. J. Lyall's edition of Mr. Edward Stack's work on the Mikirs. A transcription followed by a loose translation is not of much use to linguistic students unless they have already some knowledge of the language. I ought to explain that I have not followed Mr. Endle's system of transliteration. In a language which has no written character, it is best to trust to one's own ear. In such languages dialect springs up quickly and local differences of pronunciation abound. I have merely tried, therefore, to record what I have myself heard. With the aid of the literal versions I now give, and by carefully reading Mr. Endle's Grammar, anyone who wishes to compare Kachári with other Bodo languages, such as Garo and Tippera, ought to be able to make out the remainder of the stories in my little collection without much difficulty.

The vowels are recorded as follows:—

a	is pronounced	like	u	in	English	*hut*
ā	,,	,,	a	,,	,,	*father*
e	,,	,,	a	,,	,,	*mason*
i	,,	,,	i	,,	,,	*fit*
ī	,,	,,	ee	,,	,,	*green*
o	,,	,,	o	,,	,,	*hot*
ō	,,	,,	o	,,	,,	*lo! alone*
u	,,	,,	u	,,	,,	*pull*
ū	,,	,,	oo	,,	,,	*school*
ai	,,	,,	i	,,	,,	*bite*
au	,,	,,	ow	,,	,,	*how.*

[1] This Appendix is written by Mr. J. D. Anderson, the compiler of the little work on Kachári folk-tales mentioned on p. 54.—Ed.

The sound represented by ŭ is rather difficult to describe to Europeans. To my ear, it seems rather guttural, something like the u in "ugh!" or the vulgar pronunciation of girl as "gurl." Or, again, it may be said to be like the French *eu* in *peu*, as pronounced by English people. Or perhaps a still nearer approximation is the Englishman's "er" when he pauses in making an after-dinner speech. The sound is of some importance, as -ŭi is the suffix by which the adverb in modern Kachári is formed from the adjective. Thus ga-hām, good; gahām-ŭi, well. Also the continuative participle, as, thāng-ŭi, thāng-ŭi; going, going—as he went.

When ā is added to a noun, it is, as in Assamese, the sign of the nominative. If the word ends in a vowel, and especially in the vowel ā, an euphonic i is inserted between the two vowels. Thus hingzau-sā is "woman." Hingzau-sā-i-ā is "the woman," in a narrative. Similarly -au is the inflexion marking the locative case. If the word ends in ā, this letter is divided from au by an euphonic i.

Words borrowed from Assamese or other Indian languages are printed in Roman letters. Some such may have escaped me. If so, they have probably been so transmuted by Bodo habits of pronunciation as to have become completely naturalised.

Ā inserted or "infixed" in the middle of a verb (between stem and inflexion) is the sign of the negative. Sometimes the euphonic i precedes it. Sometimes, especially before a guttural sound, it is converted into e.

No other supplementary explanations beyond those given in Mr. Endle's note on grammar seem required here.

(I) ĀBRĀ-NĪ KHORĀNG.

Simpleton-of Story.

Sā-se brai burui *dangman.* *Bi-sŭr-hā sā-se gothō*
One old man old woman were. Them-to one boy

dangman. *Bī sān*[1]*-se* brai - burui - *nī - au* *mosō bai-nŭ*
was. He day-one old-man old-woman-to bullock buy-to

lāgi thākā *bī-naise.* Khintu brai burui *gothō-khō*
for money beg-ged. But old man old woman boy-to

āzlā *nu-nānŭi* thākā *hŭ-ā-man.* *Gothō-ā em-brā-brā*
silly see-ing money give-not-did. Boy again and again

[1] Sān = literally, the sun.

bi-nai-khai thākā *zakhai-brüi*[1] *hü-naise.* *Phāre*
begging-because-of money four-fours give-did. Then

gothō-ā mosō bai-nü lāgi *thāng-üi thāng-üi man-thām*
boy bullock buy-to for go-ing go-ing three

āli-*nī* khāthi-*au ga-hām mosō mā-se nu-nānüi, be* āli-*au*
roads-of near-at good bullock one see-ing, that road-on

thākā *din-nānüi, mosō-khō khā-nānüi lābo-naise. Thāng-üi*
money plac-ing, bullock-to bind-ing take-did. Going

thāng-üi bī-hā khī-nü on-khāt-nānüi mosō-khō hā-grā[2]
going he to ease himself depart-ing bullock forest

dai-se-au khā-nānüi din-nānüi khī-hüi-bā[3]
branch-one-to bind-ing plac-ing to ease himself go-ing

mosō-ā be-thing khāt-lāng-naise. Phāre be khī-nai-nī-fraι
bullock that-way run-away-did. Then he easing-from

fai-nānüi, mosō-khō nu-e-khai hā-grā hā-grā nāmai-
com-ing, bullock see not-because forest forest seek-

bai-naise.[4] *Arü bī müi zonthrā nu-nānüi, bī-khō-nü bī-nī*
wander-did. And he deer male see-ing, it-indeed him-of

mosō han-nānüi, hüsü-baie hüsü-baie un-au hā-grā zethāp-
bullock say-ing, hunt-ing hunt-ing after forest thicket-

au gongā nāng-nānüi[5] *thāp-thā-nānüi thā-naise. Obāsü bī*
in horns stick-ing caught-stay-ing stay-ed. Then he

müi-khō godo-i-au dīdung-zang khā-nānüi no-hā-lāgī dīdung
deer-to neck-on cord-with bind-ing house-up-to string

zorai zorai *no man-fai-naise. Beau-nü bīmā bīfā-i-ā*
ty-ing ty-ing house reach-come-did. Then mother father

süng-naise, "nang mosō bai-nü thāng-nai-ā, hürü?"[6]
ask-ed, you bullock buy-to go-did-not, eh?

Obāsü bī būng-naise, "be dīdung-khō bü-bā-nü, zang-für
Then he say-did, this string-to tug-see, you

mosō man-gan." Erüi han-nānüi, sā-thām zang
bullock get-will. Thus say-ing, they-three together

dīdung-au hom-nānüi bü-bā-naise. Bü-ī bü-ī müi-ā no
string-on seiz-ing haul-ed. Hauling hauling deer house

man-fai-bā; boibü gī-khrong-naise. Phāre bīmā bīfā-i-ā
reach-come-did; they all fear-much-did. Then mother-father

[1] Zakhai = a group of four, like the Hindi ganda.

[2] Hā-grā; hā = earth, *cf.* hā-zō, high earth, mountain; hā-brū, dirty earth, mud. So also düi-brū, dirty water, whence we get *Dibrugarh.*

[3] The infix *hüi* conveys a sense of "at" or "from a distance." *v.* Mr. Anderson's account of the 'agglutinative' verb; vol. III, part II, pp. 7–15 of the *Linguistic Survey of India.*—Ed.

[4] The infix bai signifies continuance.

[5] Nāng, gnāng are very like the Assamese lag and the Bengali *lāg* in the double sense of "sticking" and necessity.

[6] *Hürü.* Kacháris, like Assamese, are very fond of such expletives, which though they have little, if any, meaning, add to the liveliness of narration. Many others will be found later on.

mŭi-khō bū-thāt-nānŭi s'lai-nŭ[1] lāgi gāmī-*nī* mānsŭi-*nŭ*
deer-to beat-slay-ing exchange-to for village-of men-to
bāngan hŭ-naise.
loads send-did.

Be-au-nŭ gothō ābrā-i-ā "ai *āfā-i-ā mosō bu-thāt-nānŭi*
Then boy-foolish mother father bullock beat-killed-did
zābai" *han-nānŭi mālai-nī* gāme gāme *khithā-bai-naise.*
ate say-ing strangers-of village village say-continue-did.
Khintu *bī-khō ābrā nu-nānŭi* mansŭi-*frā bī-nī khorāng-khō*
But him foolish see-ing men his word
fathi-ā-khŭise.[2] *Bī-nī unau,* āji-*bŭ thā-i-ŭ* kāli-*bŭ*
believe-not-did. There-of after, to-day staying to-morrow
thā-i-ŭ, ābrā-i-ā bāngai det-bŭ-nānŭi[3] *gāgai-nī hingzau*
staying, fool somewhat big-grow-ing himself-of wife
namai-nŭ lāgi ārŭ brai-burui-nī-au thākā *bī-naise.*
seek-to for more old-man old-woman from money ask-did.
Be-au-bŭ hŭ-ā gār-ā, thākā *zokhai-brŭi* brai-*nī-frai*
Thereupon give-not escape-not, money four-fours old-man-from
lā-nānŭi hingzau nāmai-nānŭi thāng-naise. Thāng-ŭi thāng-ŭi
tak-ing wife seek-ing go-did. Going going
gāmī mānsŭi-*ni dŭi gathān-au zombai thā-naise. Phāre*
village men's water ghaut-at hiding stay-ed. Then
unau sāse mazāng hingzausā dŭi lāng-nŭ fai-nai nu-nānŭi,
after one pretty girl water draw-to com-ing see-ing,
dŭi gathān-au bī dŭi-lāng-nai hingzausā-khō hom-nānŭi
water ghaut-at he water-draw-ing girl-to seiz-ing
lābō-naise. Phāre fai-ŭi fai-ŭi nāmā-i-au meng-nānŭi
take-did. Then coming coming road-on tired-being
bong-fāng-fāng-se-nī[4] *sing-au* zīrai-*naise,* ārŭ *mosō*-halwā
tree-one-of under rest-ed, and bullock plough(er)
mā-se lā-nānŭi, mānsŭi *sā-se bŭ be-au-nŭ zirai-dangman.*
one taking, man one also there resting-was.
Bī-baidi bī-sŭr zirai-bā thā-bā, hom-nai lāng-zā-nai[5]
This-way they resting-staying, seiz-ed abducted

[1] S'lai, or z'lai, implies mutual action, exchange.

[2] A good instance of the characteristic double negative of Kachári, or, rather, of the fact that the inflexion khŭise is only used with the negative verb.

[3] Det, which by a common idiom can be made adjectival by adding the usual prefix, thus, ge-det = big.

[4] Bongfāng = tree, fāng-se = one, nī = sign of the genitive. As to fāng-se, see many other instances of the Kachári generic way of counting; *e.g.*, mānsŭi sā-se, one man; mosā mā-se, one tiger; etc. There are several instances in these stories.

[5] Lāng-zā-nai, the curious "passive" or "middle" participle. Perhaps the most characteristic instance of its use I have come across is in another story not given here, where a giant insults the Kachári Jack-the-giant-killer by calling him a "godo i-au set-bā gākhir *on-khāt-nai gothō,*" literally a

hingzau-i-ā zingāsī-nānŭi gāb-ŭi gāb-ŭi megong-dŭi-i-ā hā-hā-
girl lamenting cry-ing cry-ing eye-water earth-to-
lāgi[1] *bŭhi-lāng-naise. Bī-khō nu-nānŭi mosō lā-nai*
as far as flow-down-did. This see-ing bullock leading
mansŭi-*ā ābrā-nŭ khithā-naise, "nang be hingzausā-khō mau*[2]
man fool-to say-did, you that girl-to where
man-nai? Ārŭ nang bī-khō nai-nanŭi lābo-dang, na *nai-i-ā-*
get-did? And you her observ-ing take-did, or see-not-
lā-bā lābo-dang?" Obā ābrā-i-ā bŭng-naise "āng bī-khō
doing took? Then fool say-did I her
mazāng nu-nānŭi bī-sŭr-nī dŭi-gathān-nī-frai thākā *zokhai-*
pretty see-ing them-of water-ghaut-from rupees four-
brŭi din-nānŭi lābo-dang." Obā-nŭ bī buddi-*grāng-ā*[3]
fours plac-ing take-did. Then that wisdom-possessing-one
bung-naise, "nang khānā *dang. Be hingzausā mazāng-bā-*
say-did, you blind were. That girl pretty-being-
bŭ,[4] *bī-nī megong thai-ne-ā bet-nai. Nang nu-ā-khŭi-nŭ?*
though, her-of eyes two burst-are. You see-not-did?
Ho, nŭi, dŭi-ā sō-sō bŭhi-lāng-dang. Bī-baidī hingzausā-
Nay, see, water rushing flow-down-is. This-kind woman-
khō nang mā khām-nŭ?"[5]
to you what do-will?

Be khorāng khnā-nānŭi ābrā-i-ā bī-nī mosō zang
That word hear-ing fool his bullock with
s'lai-nŭ namai-naise. Khintu *bī* mānsŭi-*ā* misai-*nŭ hŭ-nŭ*
change-to wish-ed. But that man false-ly give-to
namai-i-ā. Theo-bŭ embrā-brā bī-nai-khai,
wish-ed-not. Yet again and again begging-because of,
"lā, le, lā," han-nānŭi, mosō-zang mānsŭi-*zang*
"take, then, take," saying, bullock-with mortal-with
s'lai-nānŭi, gāgai gāgai mon-*au ga-hām*[6] *man-nānŭi,* azang[7]
exchang-ing, own own mind-in well find-ing, one-person

"on-throat-squeezing-milk-exuding-boy," *i.e.*, a babe in whose mouth is still his mother's milk.

[1] Hā-hā-lāgi. The first *hā* is the word for "earth," the second is the same word used as a datival affix = "up to," while lāgi is the common Assamese word repeating the idea of the second hā.

[2] Mau of course = *mā-au*, the locative of *mā* = what.

[3] Grāng = an affix commonly used to indicate the possessor of a quality. *ā* = sign of nominative.

[4] Bā is the sign of the conditional tense, and the adjective mazáng is turned into a verb by its use.

[5] Mā khām-nŭ (in the infinitive) is curiously like the French use of "que faire?"

[6] *Ga-hām* = good; *hām-ā* = not good, bad; *hām-dang* = is good; *hām-ā-bai* = was not good, etc.

[7] Azang is simply the Assamese e jan, used distributively by repetition and heightened by the indigenous *sā-se*, which means the same as Assamese ẽ.

sā-se azang sā-se māmār thāng-lai-naise. Be-baidi-nŭ
one one person one quickly went-away. This-manner-in
thāng-ŭi thāng-ŭi[1] *ābrā-i-ā bong-fāng fāng-se sing-au burmā*
going going fool tree one under goat
lā-nai mānsŭi sā-se zo-bai thā-nai[2] *nu-nānŭi, bī-bŭ*
lead-ing man one sitting stay-ing seeing, he-too
be-au-nŭ zo-naise. Be-baidi zo-bai thā-bā, moso-ā
there-indeed sit-did. This-way sit-ting stay-ing, bullock
hā-su-dangman. Phāre bĭ burmā lānai mānsŭi-a
defecated. Then that goat leading man
bung-naise, "be mosō-nī udu-i-ā gob-long-bai, arŭ sān sā-se[3]
said that bullock's belly is burst, more day one
thābā be thoi-sī-gan." Be-au-bŭ bi ābrā-i-ā gomā nung-
staying it die-perish-will. Then that fool true think-
nānŭi, moso-khō bī-nī burmā-zung s'lai-naise. Be-baidi thāng-ŭi,
ing, bullock his goat-with exchanged. This-way going,
ārŭ sā-se thālit lā-nai mānsŭi lŭgŭ *man-nanŭi,*
also one banana bearing man meeting getting,
ābrā-i-ā bŭ zo-dangman. Khintu burmā-i-ā gāngsŭ[4] *ukhui-*
fool also sit-did. But goat grass hunger-
nānŭi ba-brāp bai-nai-au[5] *bī zo-nŭ* sukhu
ing restless wandering-on he sit-to pleasure
man-e-khai, burmā-khō bubā, burmā bā bā han-naise.
get-not-because of, goat beat-ing, goat ba-baa say-did.
Obānŭ, "ese mengnāi-i-au āng nang-khō mā-brŭi bā-gan?"
Then thus tired-being I you what-way carry-shall?
han-nānŭi, brāp-nānŭi, gār-nŭ[6] *lubui-bā, be thālit*
saying, angered-being to get rid wishing, that banana
lā-nai mānsŭi-ā, thālit-khō ābrā-nŭ hŭ-nānŭi, bī burmā-khō
carry-ing man bananas fool-to giv-ing, he goat
lāng-naise. Bī-baidi-nŭ bī-sŭr bi-ni-frai thāng-lai-naise.[7]
take-did. This-way-indeed they there-from go-away-did.
Ere-au-nŭ sā-se mānsŭi bī-nī sigāng-thing āsī khrep-
There-upon one man his front-direction finger snap-

[1] Thāng-ŭi is the adverbial participle, something like "going-ly." Gahām-ŭi = well.

[2] *Zo-bai-thā-nai* = sit-continue-stay-ing.

[3] Sān sā-se = lit. "sun one." Sā is usually the distributive word used in counting humans. I imagine its use here is not to indicate personification, but for euphony, as a jingle to sān. *Man-se* would be the normal construction.

[4] I have not marked *gāngsŭ* as an Assamese word, but it is probably a Kachári version of *ghās*.

[5] *Ba-brāp-bai-nai-au*; this is the locative case of the "passive" participle in *nai* of the "agglutinative" verb, *ba-brāp-bai*. The infix *brāp* signifies anger, restlessness, and *bai* means wandering about.

[6] Gār = to loose.

[7] *Thāng* = go: lai = severally, the same root as occurs in *s'lai* = exchange.

khrep dām-nānŭi fai-dang. Obā-sŭ khāthi-*au* lŭgŭ *man-bā,*
snap sound-ing come-did. Then near meeting getting
ābrā-i-ā bung-naise, "*āng burmā mā-se mānī hŭ-nānŭi, be*
fool said I goat one up-to giv-ing, those
thālit-khō lābōdang. Theo-bŭ āng-nī-au thālit
bananas carried-away. Yet from-me banana (you)
bī-ŭ!" *Erŭi han-nānŭi,* "*nang thālit zā-nŭ lubui-dang-bā,*[1]
beg! So say-ing, you banana eat-to wish-do-if
nang-nī bidyā-*khō āng-nŭ hŭ,*" *han-nānŭi, bī bī-au-nŭ hurā-se*
your skill me-to give, say-ing, he there hour-one
māni sŭlŭng-nānŭi, zenthen-*ŭi hā-nānŭi, thālit-khō bī-nŭ*
till teaching, as best able-being bananas him-to
hŭ-nānŭi, āsī khrep-khrep dām-nānŭi thāng-naise. Thāng-ŭi
giving finger snap-snap sound-ing depart-ed. Going
thāng-ŭi, mai gezer dāp-se-au khī-nŭ onkhāt-nānŭi
going rice tall field-one-in defecate-to going-out
khī-nai-au bī-nī bidyā-*khō bau-gār-naise.* Arŭ *be*
(in the process) his leaving forgot. And that
mai-gezer-au-nŭ gamā-bai[2] *han-nānŭi, mai-khō themā*
rice-tall-in lost-is saying, rice lice
nai-nai-baidi[3] *nai-naise. Be-au-nŭ mai-nī* girimā-*i-a*[4] *mai*
seeking-like searched. Then rice-of owner rice
hā-bai-tha-dangman[5] *nu-nānŭi, bī-khō sŭng-naise,* "*nang-hā*
was broken down seeing him asked you
be-au mā gamā-dang? Āng-nī mai-fŭr-hā hām-ā
there what have lost? My rice plants ruined
zo-thro-bai."[6] *Ābrā bung-naise,* "*āng-hā* thākā
flattened-utterly-are. Fool say-did, I rupees
zokhai-brŭi-nī bidyā *man-se be-au-nŭ gamā-bai. Nang-bŭ*
sixteen of skill one there lost. You-too
āng-zang namai-phā-bā, āng nang-khō ga-hām man-gan,"[7]
me-with seek-come-ing I you-to well meet-will,
han-nai-khai, bī-bŭ namai-ŭi namai-ŭi man-e-khai[8]
saying-because-of he-too seeking seeking get-not-because of

1 *Lubui-dang-bā*, a rather rare case of a double inflection. *Lubui-bā* would have sufficed. Much the same difference as between "if you wish" and "if you are wishing."

2 *Ga-mā*, adjectival form conjugated with the verbal inflexion *-bai*. *Cf. Lakh-mā* = hide.

3 *Nai-nai*, root repeated to signify continuous action.

4 Girimā is plainly from Sanscrit grihastā.

5 *Hā-bai-thā-dangman* = fall-continue-stay-was.

6 *Thro* = a common infix commonly used to express completeness of action. *E.g., Thoi-thro-bai* = was utterly slain.

7 *Ga-hām man-gan* = will get advantage, good.

8 *Man* = get; *e* (euphonic for *ā*) = not; *khai* = by reason of.

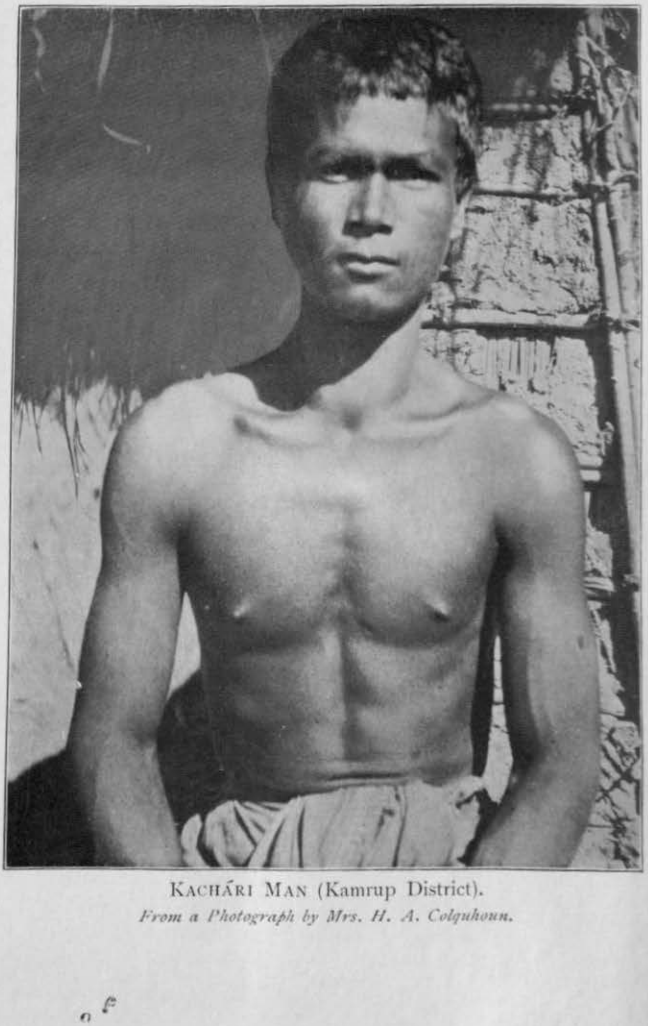
brāp-nānŭi, "*nang-nī khorāng-ā* misā," *han-nānŭi,* *āsī*
angry-being your tale false, saying, fingers
dām-bā, "*āfā,* *dā* *āng man-bai!*" *han-nānŭi* *ābrā-i-ā*
sounding, father, *now* I get-have! saying fool
khāt-lāng-naise. *Arŭ* *be-baidi-nŭ* *thāng-ŭi thāng-ŭi* fukuri
ran-away. And that-way-exactly going going pond
man-se man-hŭi-bā[1] *be-au-bŭ* *bī* *khī-nānŭi,* *bī-nī* bidyā-*khō*
one meet-ing there-too he defecating, his art
baugār-naise. *Phāre* *bi* *nāmai-e*[2] *nāmai-e* *man-ā-khŭi.*
forgot. Then he seeking seeking get-not-did.
Ere-au-nŭ sā-se mansŭi lŭgŭ *man-nānŭi sŭng-naise,* "*nang-hā*
There-on one man meeting getting ask-ed you
be-au *ma* *gamā-dang?*" *hanbā,* "*āfā,* *āng-hā* *be-au*
thĕre what lost-have, saying, father, I there
ga-hām basthu *man-se* *gamā-bai*; *nang-bŭ* *namai-bā,* *āng*
good thing one lost; you too seeking, I
gahām *man-gō,*" *bung-nai-au*[3] *bī-bŭ* *bī-zang* *nāmai-fai-*
well meet-will, saying he-too him-with search-come-
naise, *ārŭ* *un-au* *nāmai-ŭi* *nāmai-ŭi* *hā-bru* *zang*
did, and then seeking seeking earth-mud with
musunlā-musunlī *zā-nānŭi,* *theo-bŭ* *man-e-khai,* *bī*
hugger-mugger becoming yet get-not-because of that
mānsŭi-ā *brāp-nānŭi* *āsi* *dām-naise.* *Obā* *bī,* "*O āfā,*
man angry-being fingers sounded. Then he, O father,
dā-sŭ *āng be-khō man-bai,*" *han-nānŭi,* rong *zā-nānŭi,*
now-indeed I it got-have, saying, happy becoming,
no-hā-lāgi *khrep-khrep* *dām-nānŭi,* *no man-hŭi-naise.*
house-up-to snap-snap sounding house went and reached.
Bī-khō nu-nānŭi brai burui-*ā* *mini-sŭ-naise.* Aglā *bī-khō*
Him seeing old man old woman laugh-much-did. First him
sinai[4] *man-ā-khŭi-man,* *unau* *sŭng-nānui* *mithī-naise.*
recognition get-not-did after ask-ing knew.
Ārŭ thākā-*fŭr* *mā* *khām-khŭ?*" "*han-bā,* *bung-naise,* "*āng*
And rupees what did? saying (he) said, I
hingzau sā-se lābō-dangman. *Be-hā megon thai-ne bŭ* *bet-nai.*
girl one take-did. Her eyes two also were burst.
Bī-nī-khai ārŭ *mosō* *s'lai-naise.* *Bī-bŭ āng-khō* *bā-nŭ*
Therefore also bullock exchanged. It-too me to carry

[1] *Hŭi* is an interesting infix, and implies "went and did," or "did from a distance." *Man-hŭi-bā* = although he went and got; *man* = get.

[2] *Namai-e* = euphonic for *namai-ŭi.*

[3] *Bung-nai-au,* an interesting idiom; *bungnānŭi,* the present participle, apparently imitated from the Assamese, when the agglutinative verb began to decay, would have done as well; *bung-nai-au* is the locative of the "middle" participle; *bung-nai* = "on saying."

[4] Sinai is evidently chini (Assamese).



KACHÁRI MAN (Kamrup District).
From a Photograph by Mrs. H. A. Colquhoun.

thin-nai-khai brāp-nānūi, thālit s'lai-naise. Thālit-khō
ordering being angry bananas exchanged. Bananas
nu-nānūi, sā-se mānsui-*ā bī-nai-khai, be mansūi-nī-frai*
seeing one man begging-because of that man from
be bidyā-*khō sūlūng-nānūi thālit hū-nānūi lābo-dāng. Ārū*
this skill learning bananas giving took. And
āng mā khām-nū nāng-go?" Zap-bai!
I what to do was obliged? Ended!

FREE TRANSLATION.

The story of the simpleton.

There was once an old man and an old woman, and they had an only son. One day he begged rupees of the old people to buy a bullock, but they, seeing the lad was an innocent, refused his request. However, on his importuning them, they gave him sixteen rupees. On which he marched off to purchase his bullock, and finding a fine one where three roads met, he put down his money on the road and led the beast away, but as he was going, he tied his new acquisition to a branch, and, as he was looking another way, it escaped. On which he started in search of it, and seeing a stag, hunted that, until by chance its horns stuck in a thicket. Thereon he tied a cord round its neck, and joining other cords to the first, finally reached his home. On which his father and mother asked, "Did not you set out to buy a bullock?" "To be sure I did," he replied, "and if you help me to pull this cord, you will see the bullock I have bought." So they all three tugged, and presently the stag appeared, kicking and struggling, to the great fear of the old people. They killed it, nevertheless, and sent its flesh round to the adjacent villages for sale. After which the boy went about saying that the villagers had eaten cow's flesh. But seeing him to be a fool, no one paid much attention to what he said.

Another day, some time after, when the silly boy was rather bigger, he asked for money again to buy a wife with. And again, overcome by his obstinacy, they gave him sixteen rupees, taking which he set out in search of a maiden, and, after going some distance, took up his station at a place where the villagers draw water from the river. Presently a pretty girl came tripping down to get water, on which, as before, he put down his money and seized and carried off the girl. And since she was plump, he soon grew tired and rested under a tree. Presently a

man leading a plough ox came that way, and he too joined the party and sat down. But the girl sat weeping and lamenting and crying her eyes out. Seeing which, the man said to the simpleton, "Where did you get that girl? And did you have a good look at her before you took her?" "Yes, I did," said the lad, "I saw that she was a pretty girl, so I put down sixteen rupees at the village watering place and carried her off." On which the cunning fellow said, "You must be blind, my friend; she may be a pretty girl, but both her eyes are burst. Did you not see that? Why, look at them now. The water is running from them in streams. What are you going to do with a girl like that?"

On hearing that, the lad wanted to exchange the girl for the plough ox, and the man cunningly pretended to be unwilling, but was finally persuaded by the simpleton's importunacy, and said, "There, take it, and begone." So the exchange was effected, and each quickly went his own way, mightily pleased with his bargain.

After going some way, the boy met a man with a goat. This man too sat down. After a while the ox eased itself, and the man with the goat said, "That beast's belly is burst, and in a day or two it will die." The simpleton, believing every word he said, exchanged his ox for the goat, and went his way. Presently he met a man carrying a bunch of bananas, and sat down beside him. But the goat was hungry for grass and kept wandering about and crying "Ba! ba!" so that his master got no peace. Now the word "bā" in Kachári means "Carry me on your back." So the boy was vexed, and crying "How shall I carry you on my back when I am so tired?" exchanged the goat for the bunch of bananas. And again each went his way.

By chance there came a man that way snapping his fingers. And he asked for the bananas. But the simpleton said, "I got those bananas in exchange for a goat, and you ask me for them! However, if you really want to eat the fruit, teach me the art of snapping the fingers, and you shall have them." After an hour's teaching, he had learned the difficult art, more or less, and, giving up the bananas, departed snapping his fingers.

Presently he came to a fine field of rice, and there forgot his new art. Fancying he had lost it in the rice, he began searching for it in the crop as women search for lice in one another's hair, and the rice-field was all trodden down. And then the owner of the field came up and asked, "What are you looking for there?" The simpleton said, "I have lost something for which I gave sixteen rupees. If you will join me in my search, I shall be greatly obliged." So the man searched

too, and the crop suffered greatly. But finding nothing, the man, in pure vexation, snapped his fingers. On which the lad, crying, "*That* is just what I lost!" danced away gaily.

Soon after he paused on the bank of a pond, and again forgot his art, and began wading about in the mud looking for it. And a man asked him, as before, what he had lost. So he replied, "Something for which I gave sixteen rupees." And the man joined him in the search, and both became covered with mud from head to foot. And, since they found nothing, the man grew angry, and snapped his fingers. On which the boy cried in joy, "Good sir, *that* is what I lost!" and danced away to his home. And when his old parents saw him covered with mud, they burst out laughing, and, until they heard his voice, did not know who he was. And when they asked what he had done with his money, he explained that he had bought a girl, whom he had exchanged for an ox, which he gave in exchange for a goat, which angered him by ordering him to carry it on his back, so that he exchanged it for a bunch of bananas, which he gave in exchange for the art of snapping his fingers. "And what else did you expect me to do?" said the simpleton! And that's all!

II. Mŭkhrā ārŭ sessā-nī khorāng.

The tale of the monkey and the hare.

Mā-se sessā ārŭ mŭkhrā zang fisikhī[1] *man. Bī-sŭr*
One hare and monkey together friendship was. They
sā-nŭi zang ozai-*nŭ*[2] lŭgŭ *se thā-i-ŭ,* lŭgŭ *se zā-i-ŭ,* ārŭ
two together ever together stayed, together ate, and
lŭgŭ *se*[3] *thā-baā-bai-i-ŭ. Obāsŭ sān-se sā-se Darrang-ārŭi*
together wandered about. Then day-one one Darrang-ite
mānsŭi goe *thālit lā-nānŭi, ālāsī zā-nū thāng-nai nām-au*
man betel banana bringing, feast to eat going on road
lŭgŭ *man-nānŭi, bī-sŭr rai-lai-naise,*[4] "*be mānsŭi-nī*
meeting obtaining, they speaking-exchanged, this man's
goe *thālit-fŭr-khō zā-nŭ* lāgi *zang-fŭr* buddi *man-se* khām-*nŭ*
betel bananas to eat for we scheme one to make

[1] *Fi-sikhī*; *sikhī* = friend; *fi* is the causal prefix which also occurs in the word *fi-sā*, a son; *i.e.* a made person, "the being you cause to exist."
[2] Ozai = the Assamese *hadāi*, with the intensive *nŭ* added.
[3] Luguse = evidently, the Assamese *lagat*.
[4] *Rai* = converse; *lai* = mutually; *naise* is the inflection.

nāng-go," *han-nānŭi,* *sessā-khō* *nāmau* *thā-nŭ* *thin-nānŭi,*
must, saying, hare on road to stay sending,
mŭkhrā-i-ā hā-grā-i-au hākhmānai thā-naise. Phāre mansŭi-*a*
monkey forest in hidden stay-ed. Then man
man-fai-bā, sessā-khō nu-nānŭi, bī-bān din-nānŭi, hŭ-sŭ-naise.
reaching, hare-to seeing, load placing, hunted.
Hŭ-sŭ-bā, mŭkhrā-i-ā hāgrā-nī-frai māmār on-khāt-nānŭi,
Hunting, monkey forest-from quickly emerging,
thālit-fŭr-khō lā-nānŭi, bong-fāng-au gā-khŭ-hŭi-naise.[1] Ārŭ
bananas taking, in tree clambered. And
"*sessā fai-gan*" *han-nānŭi, thālit* goe-*fŭr-khō māmār zā-*
"hare will come" saying, bananas betel-nuts quickly eat-
grŭ-naise. Arŭ thālit bigur bŭā sessā-nŭ din-naise.
gobbled. And banana skins only for hare placed.

Emphāre unau sessā-khō mānsŭi-ā hom-nŭ hā-i-ā-khŭise
Then after hare-to the man to seize was-not-able
ārŭ un-au no-i-au[2] *thāng-phā-phin-naise.*[3] *Obāsŭ sessā-i-ā*
and after to house go-away-back-did. Then hare
gābzri-ŭi gabzri-ŭi thāng-nānŭi, fisikhī-khō lŭgŭ *man-hŭi-nānŭi,*
shouting shouting going, friend meeting obtaining,
gur *thālit* *bī-bā,* *thālit bigur bŭā hŭ-naise.*
molasses bananas on begging, banana skins only gave.
Bī-nī-khai sessā-i-ā brāp-nānŭi, "be-khō bāngai dukhu *hŭgan,"*
Therefore hare being angry, to him some trouble will give
mon-*au nung-nānŭi, thāso-bāre*[4] *sing-au thā-hŭi-naise.*
in mind thinking, *Kachhu* plants under went and stayed.
Un-au mŭkhrā-i-ā bong-fāng-nī-frai on-khāt-nānŭi, "sikhī-lŭi,
After monkey from tree descending, oh, friend,
sikhī-lŭi!" han-ŭi han-ŭi, gābzrī gābzrī thāng-bā, sessā-i-ā
oh friend, saying saying, shouting shouting going, hare
brāp-nā-nŭi bung-naise, "mā-thŭ[5] *sikhī sikhī lŭi?*[2] *Āng*
being angry said, what's this "friend friend," eh? I
be-au-nŭ rāzā-*nī* khuser[6] *ne-fai-dang. Nang-nŭ*
here king's sugar-cane am come to watch. You
āng-khō mā-nŭ nāng-go?" Obā-sŭ mŭkhrā-i-ā nu-zā-hŭi-
of me what want? Then monkey going and
nānŭi[7] *bung-naise, "he sikhī, khuser-khō āng-nŭ tho-se hŭ,*
looking said, oh, friend, sugar-cane to me one bit give,

[1] *Gākhŭ* = climb; *gākhŭ-hŭi* = went and climbed.
[2] *No* = house; *au* = datival inflection; the *i* is inserted for euphony.
[3] *Phā-phin*; an infix implying "returning."
[4] *Thāso* may perhaps be a corruption of Assamese *kasŭ*.
[5] *Thŭ* and *lŭi* are examples of idiomatic expletives which are practically untranslatable. So also *herā*.
[6] Khuser is of course Assamese *khusiyār*.
[7] *Nu* = see; *zā* = be, become; *hŭi* = going.

herā! Bese gathāu āng zā-nai nī," han-bā, sessā bung-naise,
do! How sweet I eating see, saying, hare said,
"*Āng nang-nŭ hŭ-nŭ hā-i-ā.* Rāzā *khnā-bā āng-khō*
I to you to give am not able. King on hearing me
bu-gan." Theo-bŭ bī embrā-brā bi-nai-khai,
will beat. However he again and again because of begging,
"*zā, lŭi, zā,*[1] *āng nang-zang hā-liā," han-nānŭi, zā-nŭ*
eat, there, eat, I with you am not able, saying, to eat
hŭ-naise. Phāre bī zā-nānŭi, sālā-i-au man-bā, "sikhī, āng
gave. Then he eating, on tongue catching, friend, I
thoi-naise," han-nānŭi, babrāp-bai-bā, sessā bung-naise,
am killed, saying, wandering distractedly, hare said,
"*nang gagai-nŭ* dukhu *man-dang. Āng dā nang-khō mā*
you your own trouble procured. I now to you what
khām-*gan?" han-nānŭi, bere-jothā-nī* bāhā *sing-au thā-hŭi-*
shall do? saying, hornets of nest under went and
naise. Mŭkhrā-bŭ un un gabzrī-nānŭi thāng-nānŭi,
stayed. Monkey-too behind behind shouting going,
ārŭ *nu-zā-hŭi-nai-sŭi-lā-i-ŭ.*[2] "*Sikhī, nang mā*
also went and watched him with care. Friend, you what
khām-dang?" bung-bā, sessā khithā-naise, "āng rāzā-*nī zothā*
are doing? on saying, hare said, I king's drum
ne-dang," han-bā, "Sikhī, āng-nŭ bāngai dām-nŭ hŭ, herā!"
am guarding, saying, friend, to me a little to play give, do!
Sessā-i-ā bung-naise, "ŭh! āng hā-i-ā, herā; rāzā *khnā-bā*
Hare said, oh! I cannot, truly, king on hearing
āng-khō bu-thāt-gan," bung-bā bŭ, embrā-brā "āng
me beating will kill, saying even, again and again I
lāsui-*sŭ dām-gan, herā," han-nānŭi, bere bāhā-khō ākhai-*
very lightly will play, really, saying, hornets' nest hand-
phāt-ne zang bu-zāp-naise. Obānŭ bere-frā mukhang,[3]
palms-two with beat and broke. Then hornets face,
megon, modom,[3] *gāsenŭ ot-phop-bā mŭkhrā-i-ā gāp-khrau*
eyes, body, all stinging-hurting monkey howling

[1] *Zā* = eat (the imperative is always the bare root, as in so many other languages). The word reminds me of a little story which shows the perplexities of bilingual people. A Kachári went to see his Assamese mother-in-law, who provided food and hospitably said (in Assamese) "*Khā, khā.*" On which her son-in-law, obeying her injunction in Kachári, bound her hand and foot. Seeing his mistake, she laughed and said, in Kachári, "*Zā, zā.*" On which he, much puzzled, went away!

[2] A good example of the agglutinative verb, for which in Hinduised Kachári would be substituted a long succession of participles, such as *nu*-nānŭi, *zā-nānŭi, thāng-nānŭi*, etc. It is impossible, of course, to translate all the infixes severally.

[3] Perhaps *mukhang* is Assamese, as well as *ātheng* which occurs elsewhere, and *modom* may be *badan.*

gāp-si ba-brāp-bai-naise.[1] *Obānia sessā-i-ā bung-naise, "āng*
yelling wandered about. Then monkey said, I
dū-hūi-nū nang-nū khithā-dangman, theobū nang khorāng
repeatedly to you said, yet you word
lā-i-ā. Āng mā khām-gan?" han-nānūi, ārū dāp-se-au
accepted-not. I what shall do? say-ing, and field-one-in
zibo-gowāl-*nī* khathi-*au thā-hūi-naise. Āzang-hā mūkhrā*
a kind of snake near went and stayed. Accordingly monkey
bū khī-thu khī-thu thāng-nānūi bung-naise, "ārū be-au lai
too behind behind going said, and there eh?
nang mā khām-dang, hera?" Sessā bung-naise, "āng rāzā-
you what are doing, say? Hare said, I king-
lūng-hā-nī[2] *sāmā*-lauthi *ne-dang, herā!" bung-bā, "Sikhī,*
people-of sceptre am watching, sir! saying, friend,
āng-nū-bū hū, herā! āng bāngai dāng-nai-ni." Bī "hū-ā"
to me too give, do! I a little wield and see. He "not give"
han-bā-bū embrā-brā dāng-nai-nānūi be-au-bū bī zibo-
saying-even again and again wielding then-also he snake-
zang ot-zā-naise.[3] *Bī-nī-frai sessā thāng-nānūi photo-bāre-au*
by bitten be-came. There-from hare go-ing marsh-in
thā-hūi-naise. Mūkhrā bū gābzrī gābzrī thāng-nānūi,
went and stayed. Monkey also shouting shouting go-ing,
ārū lūgū *lā-hūi-nānūi sessā-khō sūng-bā, bī bung-naise,*
and meeting going and getting hare-to asking, he said,
"*be-khō-nū* rāzā-*nī* dolā *han-nānūi bung-ū." Mūkhrā*
This king's palanquin saying call. Monkey
bung-naise, "Sikhī, āng bāngai uthī-*nai nī, herā!" bung-bā,*
said, friend, I a little ascending see, please! saying,
"*ūh! āng hū-nū hā-i-ā.* Rāzā *khnā-bā āng-khō mā*
oh! I to give am not able. King hearing to me what
bung-gan? Nang mā-bā ābrā mānsūi, *hera! Khorāng*
will say? You what sort fool man, eh! Word
khithā-bā-bū khnā-song-ā," bung-bā-bū, mūkhrā-i-ā, "nong-ā,
saying-even not heed, saying-even, monkey, no, no,
herā sikhī, do-se būā uthī-*gan," han-nānūi, photo-bāre-au*
oh friend, one bit only will ascend, saying, on marsh
bāt-drum-bā, godo-hā-lāgi *thrup thāng-naise. Obāsū sessā*
jumping, neck-up too flop stuck. Then hare
khithā-naise, "duhui thālıt zā-nānūi bigur hū-nai-ā,
said, "now bananas eating skin giving-(person),

[1] *Ba-brāp-bai-naise* = wandered distractedly about. The infix *bai* signifies wandering, and *babrāp* being in pain or wrath.
[2] Rāzā-*lūng-hā-nī* = a literal translation of Assamese rājā-hātar.
[3] An instance of the rare passive, a manifest imitation of the Assamese idiom-ot-zā-nū, "bit-become-to," to be bitten.

be-nŭ, herā sikhī, nang be-au-nŭ thā-dŭ! Āng nang-khō
here, oh friend, you, there-even stop! I you
khulum-bai! Āng thāng-naise," han-nānŭi, bī
pay you my reverence! I am going, saying, he
mŭkhrā-khō be-au-nŭ gār-lai-naise.
the monkey there left behind.

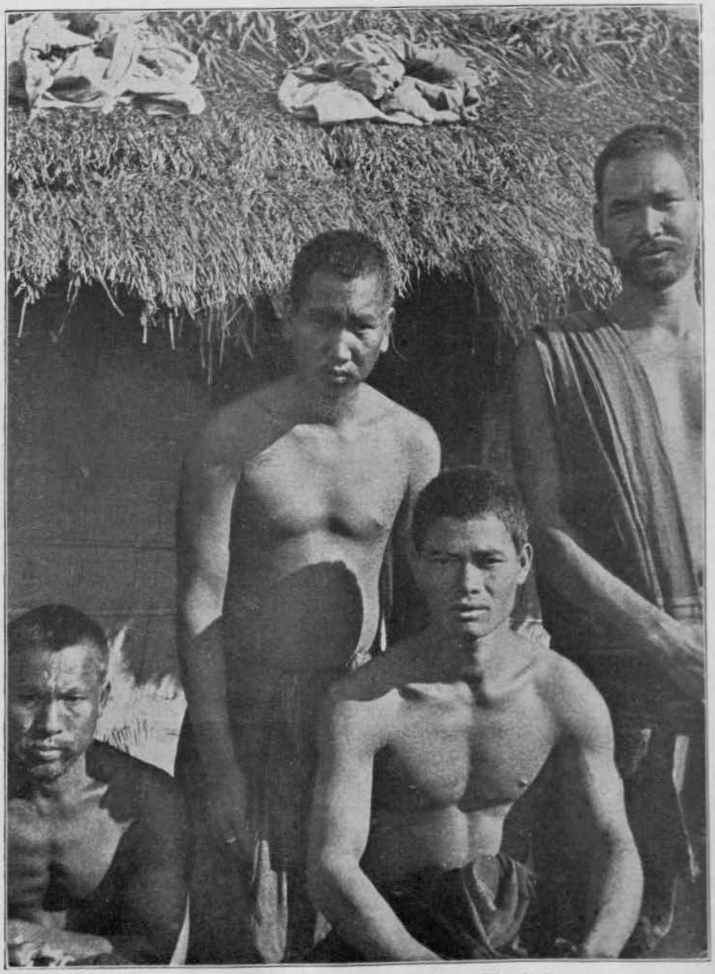
Obasā unau bī-thing gāndā *mā-se fai-nai nu-bā,*
Then after that-direction rhinoceros one coming seeing,
bī-khō mukhrā-i-ā dikhāng-nŭ thing-dangman. Gāndā-i-ā
to him monkey to extricate was ordering. Rhinoceros
bung-naise, "āng-hā ukhui-sŭi-dang ārŭ *dŭi-gāng-sŭi-dang;*
said, I hungry-very-am and water-thirsty-very-am;
āng nang-khō dikhāng-nŭ hā-i-ā," han-nānŭi, bī thāng-
I you to extricate am not able, saying, he went
naise.
away.

Bī-nī un-au ārŭ moesŭ *mā-se fai-nai-au, bī-khō-bŭ*
There after also buffalo one on coming, to him also
khithā-dangman. Bī-bŭ khnā-song-ā-lā-bā blot thāng-naise.
said. He also not attending pop! went away.
Boi-nŭ-khri khī-zap-au[1] *mosā mā-se ukhui-sŭ-nānŭi bī-*
Than him tail-end-at tiger one hungry-very-being that-
thing thāng-dangman. Mŭkhrā nu-nānŭi bung-naise, "he
direction was going. Monkey seeing said, Oh
āfā, nang āng-khō be dukhu-*nī-frai dikhāng-ā-bā* ārŭ
father, you to me this trouble-from if (you) extricate other
raubo dikhāng-lia," "han-nānŭi, gahām-ŭi khulum-nŭ
anyone extricate will not, saying, well to worship
hom-naise. Theo-bŭ bī, "āng nang-khō dikhāng-nānŭi mā
began. Still he, I you extricating what
man-gan?" han-nānŭi, khozo-ne-sŭ thāng-bā, mŭkhrā-i-ā
shall get? saying, paces-two-about going monkey
bung-naise, "āfā, nang āng-khō be photo-bāre-nī-frai
said, father, you me this marsh-from
dikhāng-nānŭi hā-bru-fŭr-khō su-srā-nānŭi, āng-khō
extricating muddiness (lit. "muds") cleansing me
nang zā," han-bā, bī, ukhui-sū-nai-khai be khorāng-au
you eat, saying he hungriness-because-of that word
khnā-song-nānŭi, bī-khō bung-naise, "āng nang-khō zā-nŭ mon
hearkening to him said I you to eat mind
gŭi-ā, manāthŭ, be-baidi dukhu-*au gaglai-nai-khō*
hāve not, however, that sort trouble-in fallen (person) to
dikhāng-ā-bā, āng-hā gahām zā-gan. Theo-bŭ, gaigai-nŭ
extricate-not-if, I good will-be. However yourself

[1] An expressive phrase for "last of all."

zāsī-nānŭi hŭnai-i-au, āng zā-nŭ hāgo," han-nānŭi, bī-nī
beseeching on giving I to eat am able, saying, his
lānzai-khō phol-au hot-bā,[1] *mŭkhrā-i-ā bī-nī lānzai-au hom-ba,*
tail- in marsh sending, monkey his tail seizing
dikhāng-bŭ-naise. Mŭkhrā khithā-naise, "āfā, nang āng-khō
dragged him out. Monkey said Father, you me
dā-niā modom-fŭr-khō gahām-ŭi su-srā, emphare rān-bā zā,"
now body (plural) well dry, after drying eat,
han-nānŭi sān-dung-au do-se zo-bai thā-dangman. Ere-au-nŭ
saying sun-shine-in one bit sitting remained. Then
mosā-i-ā phāt-se-thing nai-ne-au, bī bong-fāng-au fāt-
tiger one other direction on looking he in tree helter-
drāp gā-khŭ-naise. Mosā be-khō nu-nānŭi, brāp-nānŭi,
skelter clambered. Tiger him seeing, angry-being,
bongfāng guri-*au-nŭ sān-ne sān-thām ne-bai thā-naise.*
tree root at days-two days-three watch-ing stay-ed.
Be-baidi thā-nānŭi, khugā sī-nānŭi, hāthai hāzīzī
This-way stay-ing, jaws gap-ing teeth display
khām-*nānŭi, thoi-thī-nānŭi* thā-*naise,* ārŭ *thāmfai-frā*
making dead-pretend-ing stay-ed, and flies
khugā-i-au brūng-brūng han-lai-nŭ hom-naise. Be-au-nŭ
mouth in buzz buzz to continue to stay began. Thereon
mŭkhrā-i-ā ose ose thoi-māt-bai nung-nānŭi, bongfāng
monkey by degrees dead-verily-is thinking, tree
bīzō-nī-frai lāse lāse *onkhāt-bŭ-nānŭi,* āglā lāse-*i-hai*
top-from slowly slowly descending, first carefully
lānzai *khugau su-nai-grŭ-bā-bŭ mosā mung-bo*
tail in jaw insert-examine-feel-ing-even tiger anything
khām-ā-khŭise. Ārŭ un-au ātheng thāng-se sŭ-nānŭi hŭ-nai.
did not do. And after leg one inserting gave.
Be-au-bŭ mungbō khām-ā-khŭise. Obāsŭ mŭkhrā bung-naise,
Thereon anything did not do. Then monkey said,
"*nang āng-nī ātheng-fŭr-khō khrem-khrem ot-nānŭi*
you my legs— crunch-crunch biting
zā-gauman, lānzai-*khō khrem-khrem ot-nānŭi*
would have eaten, tail crunch-crunch biting
zā-gauman," han-nānŭi, rong *zā-nānŭi,* "*dā-niā āng-nī*
would have eaten, saying, happy becoming, Now my
khoro-khō-nŭ zā," han-nānŭi, khug-au sŭ-nānŭi hŭ-bā, obānŭ
head-also eat, saying, in mouth inserting giving, then
mosā-i-ā khrem ot-khrep-naise. Thoi-bai. Zap-bai!
tiger scrunch bite-crunch-did. Died! Finished!

[1] Lit. "throwing."



Group of Kachári Men (Kamrup District).
From a Photograph by Mrs. H. A. Colquhoun.

FREE TRANSLATION.

The Monkey and the Hare.

A monkey and a hare were great friends. They ever lived together, ate together, and went about together. One day meeting a man from Darrang going to a feast with a load of bananas and other delicacies, they said to one another, "We must get what that man is carrying by some trick or other." Whereupon the monkey bade the hare stay on the road, while he himself hid in the forest. Presently the man, seeing the hare, put down his load and ran after it. On which the monkey, coming out from the jungle, carried off the bananas and other things. And for fear the hare should come and ask his share, the monkey hastily gobbled up the bananas and betel-nuts and kept the skins only for his friend.

The man, not being able to catch the hare, went home, and then the hare, shouting aloud, searched for the monkey, and, when he found him, demanded his share of the spoil, and only got the skins. So, being vexed, he determined to have his revenge. And first he went and hid under some acrid *kachu* plants. And when the monkey came and asked what he was doing, he replied, "My friend, I have the honour to be in charge of the king's sugar-canes." So the monkey said, "Ah, give me just a bit, do." But the hare replied, "And what do you suppose the king will say?" But the monkey was importunate. So the hare gave him a stalk of *kachu* to chew, and when the acrid juice stung his tongue, the monkey began dancing about howling. But the hare coolly said, "It's all your own fault! You *would* have a stick of the king's sugar-cane, and what could I do?"

Then the hare went and took up his post under a hornet's nest, and the monkey came along, shouting for his friend, and, finding him asked, "What may you be doing *there*?" And the hare replied, "I am guarding the king's drum, so there!" "Ah," said the monkey, "do let me beat the king's drum!" "Oh, but I cannot," said the hare, "the king will be angry." But the monkey insisted, and said, "I will play on the drum *very* gently; you see!" So the hare consenting, the monkey clapped his two palms on the hornet's nest and broke it, so that the hornets emerged, and stung him sore, so that he screamed with pain. But the hare only said, "You would have your way, and what was I to do?"

Next the hare went and sat down near a *gowal* snake. And the monkey came shouting, and asked, "What are you about now, my friend?" The hare replied, "I am now in charge of the king's sceptre!" On which the monkey said, "Ah, let me just wield the king's sceptre for a moment!" But the hare answered, "I cannot do that, for the king will be angry." But the monkey being importunate, he consented. Whereupon, of course, the snake bit him, and he howled with pain.

Then the hare went and sat in a marshy place, and the monkey came shouting in search of him, and asked what he was doing. And the hare told him he was sitting on the king's litter. "Ah," prayed the monkey, "let *me* too sit on the king's litter." But the hare said angrily, "And what do you suppose the king will say? It strikes me you are a fool, my friend, and listen to no warning!" But the monkey, insisting, leaped into the marsh, sank up to his neck, and stuck there miserably. On which the hare leaped out and cried, "Now, my kind friend, you who eat bananas and give me the skins, you can just stay where you are! My compliments! I am off!" So saying, he left him to his fate.

Presently a rhinoceros came that way, and the monkey begged him to extricate him. But the rhinoceros remarked that he was hungry and thirsty and on his way home to dinner, and went his way. And a buffalo also passed by and refused to help. Finally a tiger came, extremely ravenous. And the monkey entreated him respectfully to pull him out; but the tiger said he did not see how it would profit him to come to his rescue. But when he had gone some two paces, the monkey called after him, "Look here, if you will drag me out of the marsh, you can clean me of the mud, and eat me!" And since the tiger was extremely hungry, he consented and said, "It is not that I have any particular desire to eat you, but if I do a good deed, I shall get virtue. However, as you are good enough to insist, I am willing to make a meal of you." So saying, he put his tail into the marsh, and the monkey, catching hold of it, was slowly dragged forth. On which the monkey said, "Now let me dry myself in the sun, and when the mud is dry you can scrape it off and eat me." So he sat in the sun, and the tiger waited hungrily. But the monkey seized the opportunity when the tiger chanced to look another way, and clambered up a tree. At that the tiger was very angry, and waited two or three days at the foot of the tree. Finally he pretended to die of starvation and lay there with his mouth open and his great teeth showing. So the monkey climbed down, slowly and cautiously. And the tiger lay quite still, so that the flies came and buzzed in his

mouth. And first the monkey carefully put his tail in the tiger's mouth. But he never stirred. Then the monkey thrust his leg in the tiger's mouth, and still he did not move. "Ah," said the monkey, in great glee, "you would have gobbled up my tail, and scrunched up my limbs, would you?" And so saying, the silly creature thrust his head in the tiger's mouth. And the jaws closed with a scrunch, and the monkey died, and that's all!

III.—Sā-se phālāngī gotho-nī khorāng.

The story of the merchant lad.

Sā-se udu-i-au-nŭ bīfā thoi-zā-nai gotho dangman.
One womb-in-even father dead-becoming boy was.

Phāre āzī āzī khāli khāli *bī ge-det zā-bā*
Then to-day to-day to-morrow to-morrow he big becoming

sān-se bīmā-nī-au sŭng-naise, "ai, āglā *zang-fŭr-hā*
day-one mother's to ask-ed, mother, before us people-'s

āfā-i-ā, lai, mā mau-nānŭi zā-dangman?" han-bā, bīmā-i-ā
father, now, what labouring eat-did saying mother

hāmā su-nānŭi khithā-naise, "nam-fā-i-ā desŭ desŭ
breath sighing said, your father country country

fālāngī khām-nānŭi zā-dangman. Bī thā-blā, dā
hawking doing used to eat. He remained-if now

zang-frā ese-bŭ dukhu *zā-i-ā-man," han-bā, bi bung-naise, "ŭh,*
we thus trouble should not eat, saying he said, Eh,

obā āng bi hābā-khō hā-i-ā nā? *bese* thākā *dang,*
then I that work for able-am-not eh? as many rupees are,

āng-nŭ dihon-nānŭi hŭ," han-bā, bīmā-i-ā bung-naise, "āfā,[1]
to me producing give, saying, mother said, father

nang bī-baidi khām-nŭ nāng-ā, āng bī-ŭi gāp-ŭi
you this-way to do must-not, I beg-ging weeping

nang-nŭ zā-hŭ-gan. Nang malai-nī dekhu-*au*
you to eat-give-will. You foreign land-in

thāng-nānŭi mā-brŭi-bā thoi-bā bet-bā āng mā-brŭi
going what way-ever dying perishing I what way

thā-gan?" Theobŭ gotho-ā khnā-song-ā-lābā, embrā-brā
stay-will? Still boy not hearing again and again

bīmā-nī-au thākā *bī-nānŭi lā-nānŭi* bastu *bai-naise,*
mother-from rupees begging taking merchandise bought

[1] "Father" used affectionately for "child."

ārŭ nau *gong-se namai-nānŭi, lā-naise, ārŭ gāsenŭ*
and boat one seeking took and all
'zo zā-bā, mānsŭi *sā-nŭi-sŭ hom-nānŭi bīmā*
fit becoming, men about two seizing mother
burui-*khō khulum-nānŭi mālai-nī* dekhu-*au* nau *zang*
old woman-to worshipping foreign country boat with
thang-naise. Be-baidi-nŭ thāng-ŭī thāng-ŭi gāmī *dot-se*
went. This-manner-in going going village one
dŭi-gathān-au nau-*khō khā-nānŭi,* gāmī gāmī basthu
water-ghaut-at boat binding, village village merchandise
phān-hŭ-naise, Bi gāgai nau *ne-ŭ. Be-baidī-nŭ*
hawking-send-did He himself boat watched. This-way-in
thā-ŭi thā-ŭi be-au-nŭ sŭr-bā brai burui
stay-ing stay-ing there certain old man old woman
sā-nŭi-hā hangsŭ *gafut mā-se dangman. Bī-nŭ bī-sŭr-nŭ*
two-people-of swan white one was. It they
dŭi lā-ŭi mikhām song-ŭi hŭ-grā-man. Bī-khō-nŭ
water-giving rice cooking gave and cherished. It-itself
sān-se bī gotho-ā dŭi-gathān-au gagai-nī hangsu-*bigur-khō*
one day that boy water-ghaut-at its own swan-skin
khū-nānŭi din-nānŭi ārŭ mazāng sikhlā-sā zā-nānŭi dugui-nai
shedding placing and lovely girl becoming bathing
nu-naise. Bī-nī-frai-nŭ boi hāngsŭ-*nī* girimā
saw. From-that (time) even that swan's owners
brai-burui-*khō on-su-nānŭi thau ārŭ bī-ni* nau-*au* zī
old man old woman loving oil and his ship-in what
zī basthu *dang,* ozai-*nŭ bāngai bāngai hŭ-nŭ*
what merchandise was, always some some to give
hom-naise. Bī-baidī-nŭ basthu-*fŭr-khō fān-ŭi fān-ŭi*
began. This-way-in merchandises vending vending
fān-zap-bā nŏ-i-au fai-nai so-nai-khai bī
sale-finished-being to house come concluding-because of that
brai *burui-nī nŏ-i-au thāng-nānŭi,* thākā *zābrā*
old man old woman's house-to going money much
hŭnānŭi, hāngsŭ-*khō bī-bā,* brai burui "*ere-nŭ*
giving swan begging old man old woman, "as it is
lāng," *han-nānŭi bung-dangman,* khintu *bī* fāfu-*nāng*
take" saying, said but he sin-smitten
zā-nŭ gī-nānŭi, brai-*nī gnāng* basthu-*khai*
to become fearing old man's belonging property because of
embrā-brā thaka *hŭ-nānŭi,* hāngsŭ-*khō lābō-naise.*
importunately rupees giving swan took away.
Bī-nī-frai nau *lā-nānŭi, fai-ŭi fai-ŭi, no man-fai-*
There after boat taking, coming coming, house reach-com-

nānŭi, āzī-*bŭ* *thā-i-ŭ* khāli-*bŭ* *thā-i-ŭ* *bī* hāngsŭ
ing, to-day-too staying to-morrow-too staying he swan
mānsŭi *zā-i-e* *nu-nānŭi,* *sān-frim-bŭ* *hām-lāng-naise.*
man becomes-not seeing, day-each-on sick became.
Bī-khō-nŭ nu-nānŭi bīmā burui-*ā* *malai-nī-au* *sŭng-bā*
To him seeing mother old woman strangers-from on asking
bai-bā *rau-bŭ* *mung-bŭ* *khithā-nŭ* *hā-i-ā.* Khintu
frequenting anyone anything to say was unable. But
bi-au-nŭ burui *sā-se* *dangman.* *Bī-nī-au* *sŭng-bā,* *bī*
there old woman one was. Her on asking, she
bung-naise, "*āgŭi,* *nang* *bī-khō-nŭ* *mithi-ā-khŭi* nā? *Bī*
said, sister, you that understood-not eh? That
fālāngī khām-*nai* *thāng-nai-au* *mā-bā* *man-se* *zā-dang.*
hawking doing going-in something one thing happened.
Nang *bī-khō* buddi khām-*ba,* *mithi-nŭ* *hâ-gan,"* *han-bā,*
You to him trick doing, to understand will be able, saying,
bīmā burui-*ā* *bung-naise,* "*khitha-hor*[1]*-hai,* ai
mother old woman said, speak-out-do, mother
burui, dhorom *man-gan,"* *han-bā* *bī* *khithā-naise,* "*nang*
old woman, virtue get will, saying, she said, you
sān-se *sā-se* *sikhlā-sā* *labo-nānŭi* *nang-nī* *gotho-nī* *thema*
one day one girl taking your boy's lice
nai-nŭ *thin.* *Ārŭ* *thema* *naibai* *thā-nai-au-nŭ* *gāp-*
to search order. And lice searching in staying weep-
thī-nānai *sŭng-thāng,* "*nang* *mā-nŭ* *sān-frim-bŭ*
pretend-ing let her ask, you why day by day
hām-lāng-dang?" *Obānŭ* *bī* *bī-khō* *on-khāng-nānŭi* *bī-nī*
waste away? Then he to her feeling affection his
mon-*au* zi *khorāng* *dang,* *bī* *khithā-gan,"* *han-bā,* *bīmā*
mind-in what word is, he say-will, saying, mother
bī-baidi-nŭ *khām-naise.* *Hingzausā-i-ā* *themā* *nai-nai-au-nŭ*
that-way-in did. Girl lice while searching
gāp-thī-nānŭi *gongrai* *surukhŭ* *surukhŭ* *sŭng-naise,* "*ādā-*
weep-pretend-ing snottle snuffle snuffle ask-ed, brother-
lŭi, *nang-hā-lai* *mā* *zādang?* *Nang* *be-khō* *khithā-i-ā-*
mine, to you what has happened? You that if do not
bā, *āng* *bŭ* *khām* *dŭi* *zā-i-ā,"* *han-nai-khai* *gotho-ā,*
say, I too rice water will not eat, because of saying boy,
hāmā *su-nānŭi,* *bī-nŭ* lāse lāse *khithā-naise,* "*āng*
breath sighing, to her slowly slowly said, I
fālāngī khām-*nŭ* *thāng-nai-i-au* *dā* *āng-nī* nau-*i-au* zī
trading to do on going indeed my boat in which

[1] *Hor* = *hot* = "throw."

hāngsŭ *gafut mā-se dang, bīkhō* mānsŭi *zā-nai nu-dangman.*
swan white one is, it man becoming saw.
Khintu bī dā baidi-sŭi-ŭi-nŭ thā-bai. Bī-nī-khai āng
But it now manner-same-in stays. Because of that I
ere-baidi zā-dang." Themā nai-khāng-bā be
this manner am become. Lice seeking-finished-being those
gāsenŭ khorāng hingzausā-i-ā bī-nī bīmā-nŭ khithā-naise.
all words girl his mother-to said.
Be-khō bīmā-i-ā khnā-nānŭi boi burui-*nŭ khithā-hŭi-naise*
To her mother listening that old woman-to sent and said
lā-i-ŭ. Burui-*ā bī-khō khnā-nānŭi* buddi *hŭ-naise lā-ī-ŭ,*
exactly. Old woman to her listening wisdom gave verily,
"*nang* dinī *boi hingzausā-khō lābo-nānŭi khithā-nānŭi hŭ,*
you to-day that girl bringing saying give
bī dinī *hor-au udu-lāng-thī-nānŭi thā-thāng. Hor*
he to-day night-in sleep-deep-pretend-ing remain-let. Night
gezer-bā hangsŭ-*ā* mānsŭi *zā-nānŭi gagai-nī*
much-being swan man becoming own
modai-fŭr-khō khulum-bai-thā-i-ŭ. Be-au-nŭ bī hangsŭ
gods is wont to worship. Thereon that swan
bigur-khō zuzai-mŭ-au sŭ-nānŭi hŭ-bā, obāniā
skin hearth-on thrusting placing, thereon
mānsŭi-*nŭ thā-si-gan." Be* buddi *hŭ-nai-baidi-nŭ*
man-indeed stay-altogether-will. That wisdom giving-like-even
bīmā-i-ā hingzausā-nŭ khithā-naise, ārŭ hingzausā-i-ā bŭ
mother girl-to said and girl also
gotho-nŭ khithā-nānŭi hŭ-nai-khai, sān-se gotho-ā khurui
boy-to saying because of giving, one day boy vessel
gong-se-au khāre-zang thau-zang golai-nānŭi din-nai, ārŭ
one in ashes-with oil-with mixing placed and
songor *man-se din-naise. Hor zā-bā bī*
yak's tail one placed. Night becoming he
udui-thī-lāng-nānŭi thā-*bā,* hāngsŭ-*ā si-khāng-nānŭi*
sleep-pretend-slumber-ing staying, swan emerging
ākhā-i-au ātheng-au modom-au-bŭ khepthu-bai-dang. Theobŭ bi
on hand, on leg on body also felt (with beak) Still he
khet-khut khāmā-khŭise. Bī-nī-khai bī udu-lāng-māt-bai
stirring made not. Therefore he asleep-deep-truly-is
nung-nānŭi, gagai-nī hāngsŭ bigur-khō lāse-*hai khu-nānŭi*
thinking, her own swan skin slowly unfastening
din-nānŭi gagai-nī modai-fŭr-khō mon *hŭ-nānŭi,*
placing her own gods-to mind giving,
khulum-bai-thā-dangman. Ere-au-nŭ srī-srī lāse-*hai*
worshipping-staying-was. So still-still slowly

si-khāng-nā-nŭi *boi* hāngsŭ *bigur-khō* *thāpne-hai*
emerging that swan skin suddenly
zuzai-mu-au *e-fop-nānŭi* *din-naise.* *Unau* *bigur-ā*
in hearth thrusting placed. Then skin
khām-nānŭi. *manām-khāng-bā,* *bī-khō* *manām-nānŭi*
scorching, smell-emerging, that smelling
man-nānŭi, "*āng-khō* *mā* khām-*khŭ,* *mā* khām-*khŭ?*"
obtaining, To me what have done, what have done?
han-nānŭi, *fāt-drāp-dō* *gaglai-nānŭi,* *khāng-grāng-nānŭi,*
saying, hither-thither falling about, rolling about,
thoi-hāp-nānŭi *thā-naise.* *Obāsŭ gotho-ā māmār fai-nānŭi*
half dead becoming stayed. Then boy quickly coming
khurui-nī *thau-khō* *khoro-modom-ātheng-ăkhai-au* *hŭ-nānŭi,*
vessel-of oil head - body - leg - arm - on giving,
songor *zang* *sip-bai-thā-naise,* *ārŭ* *bī-baidī-nŭ* *sip-ŭi*
yak's tail with continued to fan, and that-way-in fanning
sip-ŭi *thā-blā,* *gabau-zang* *hāmā* *sukhāng-naise,* *ārŭ*
fanning on staying, with delay breath sighed-forth and
thāng-khāng-naise. *Bī-baidi-nŭ* mānsŭi *zā-nānŭi,*
alive-became. That-way-in man becoming,
sā-nŭi-zang *hābā* khām-*lai-nānŭi* *zābrā* din-*hā-lāgi*
they-two-together marriage do-exchang-ing many days-up-to
fi-sā fisŭ zang rozo-rŭ-man-zā-lai-bai-thā-naise! *Zapbai!*
boys girls with "lived happily ever after." Finished!

FREE TRANSLATION.

The story of the merchant lad.

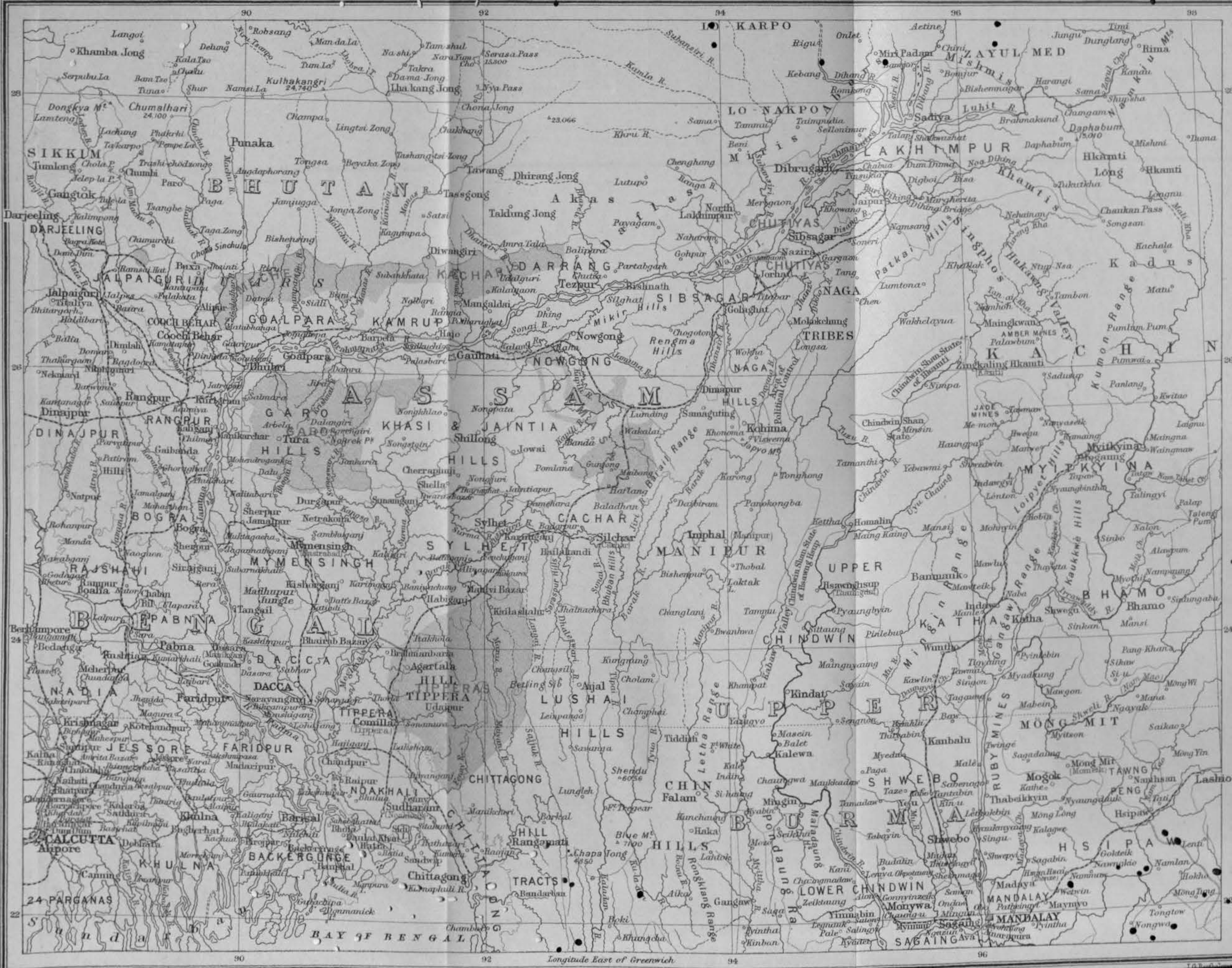
There was a certain lad whose father died before he was born. And, one day, when he had grown a big boy, he asked his mother, "What did my father do for his living?" And his mother, drawing a long breath, said, "Your father used to travel about selling things. Ah, if he were alive we should have no trouble to endure!" But the boy replied, "Do not you think that I too could earn money in that way? Bring out what money there is, and let me see what I can do." But his mother said, "Ah, my son, you must not talk like that! If you go away into foreign lands and die there, what will become of me?" But her son would not listen to her, and by importunity induced her to give him money, with which he bought goods, and procured a boat, and hiring two or three men, took leave of

his mother, and went into a far country to trade. Finally he came to a certain place where he moored his boat, at the place where men draw water, and sent his men to hawk his wares from village to village while he himself stayed in the boat. It happened that there lived hard by an old couple who possessed a white swan, which they fed and tended as though it were their own child. One day, the lad saw this swan strip itself of its swan plumage and become a beautiful maiden, and bathe. From that time forth he paid great attention to the owners of the swan, and gave them presents of the oil and other things he had in his boat. And when the merchandise had been sold and the time was come to go home, he went to the old people's house and offering much money begged them to sell him their swan. But they were for giving him their swan for nothing. He, however, feared to commit a sin if he took it as a gift, and, because it was the old man's property, compelled him to take much money in exchange for it, and went away.

But when he came home with his boat, behold, the swan remained a swan, and, for disappointment, the lad pined and wasted away. Seeing which, his old mother consulted various people, but got no help. Finally, she went to a certain wise woman, who said, "Sister, do not you understand? Something has happened to him while he was away trading. You must use a device to find out what it is." To which the mother replied, "Tell me plainly what it is, and you will do a good deed." So the wise woman gave this advice. "Some day do you direct a maiden to search for lice in his hair. And while she is doing this, let her pretend to be mightily grieved, and let her ask him what is the matter. And he will feel flattered and will open out his heart to her." And the mother did as the wise woman directed her. The girl she sent wept and snuffled as she tended the lad and said, "Tell me why you pine and grow thin; else I too will give up food and drink." And so he, heaving a sigh, explained thus: "While I was away trading, I saw the white swan which is in my boat turn into a maiden. But now she remains a swan, and for her love I am pining."

When her task was done, she told the lad's mother, who sent word to the wise woman. The wise woman said, "Let the girl tell him that the swan maiden worships her own gods in the dead of night. Let him pretend to lie asleep, and when she divests herself of her swan plumage, let him seize it and thrust it into the hearth, and then she will always remain a girl." The old mother directed the girl accordingly, and the girl told the lad. One day he mixed ashes and oil in a vessel, and procured

a yak's tail, and, when night was come, he lay down and pretended to be fast asleep. Presently the swan crept out, and feeling his hands, feet, and body with her beak, was satisfied that he slept. Then slowly taking off her swan skin, she became absorbed in the worship of her country's gods. And the lad seeing his opportunity, grasped the swan plumage and thrust it into the hearth, so that it was singed, and the smell of the feathers filled the place. And the maiden, smelling the burning feathers, cried, "What have you done to me? What have you done to me?" So saying, she fell down in a faint and seemed as one dead. But the lad, taking his vessel of oil, anointed her with it, and fanned her gently with the yak's tail, till she came to. And so they married, and begat many sons and daughters, and lived happily ever after. And that's all!



LO KARPO
LO NAKPO
SIKKIM
Gangtok
Darjeeling
DARJEELING
BHUTAN
Punaka
Tongsa
Tawang
Dhirang Jong
Taklung Jong
Chumalhari
Kulhakangri
Khamba Jong
Daflas
Akas
Miris
Mishmis
ZAYUL MED
Rima
Sadiya
LAKHIMPUR
Dibrugarh
North Lakhimpur
CHUTIYAS
Sibsagar
SIBSAGAR
Jorhat
Golaghat
Nazira
DARRANG
Tezpur
Mangaldai
KAMRUP
Gauhati
GOALPARA
Goalpara
Dhubri
COOCH BEHAR
Cooch Behar
JALPAIGURI
Jalpaiguri
Rangpur
RANGPUR
DINAJPUR
Dinajpur
ASSAM
GARO HILLS
Tura
KHASI & JAINTIA HILLS
Shillong
Cherrapunji
Jowai
NOWGONG
Nowgong
Mikir Hills
Rengma Hills
NAGA TRIBES
NAGA HILLS
Kohima
Dimapur
Lumding
Samaguting
Khamtis
Singphos
Hukawng Valley
KACHIN
Kumon Range
MYITKYINA
Myitkyina
Mogaung
BHAMO
Bhamo
KATHA
Katha
UPPER CHINDWIN
Homalin
Kindat
Kalewa
LOWER CHINDWIN
Monywa
SHWEBO
Shwebo
RUBY MINES
Mogok
MONG MIT
MANDALAY
Maymyo
SAGAING
Sagaing
HSIPAW
Hsipaw
Lashio
NORTH HSENWI
BURMA
CHIN HILLS
Falam
Tiddim
MANIPUR
Imphal
CACHAR
Silchar
SYLHET
Sylhet
MYMENSINGH
Mymensingh
BOGRA
Bogra
RAJSHAHI
PABNA
Pabna
BENGAL
DACCA
Dacca
Faridpur
FARIDPUR
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